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Bass Guitar Magazine

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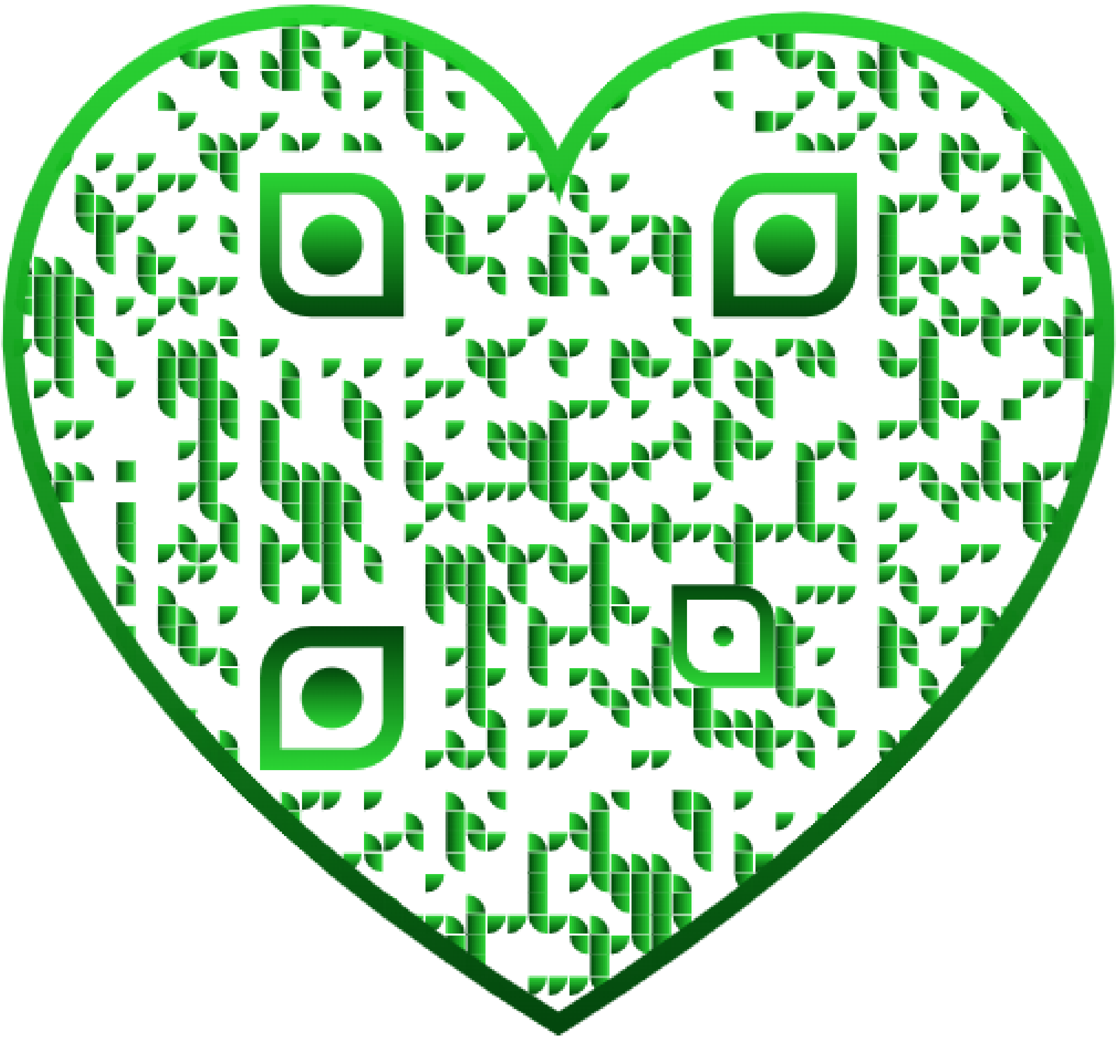

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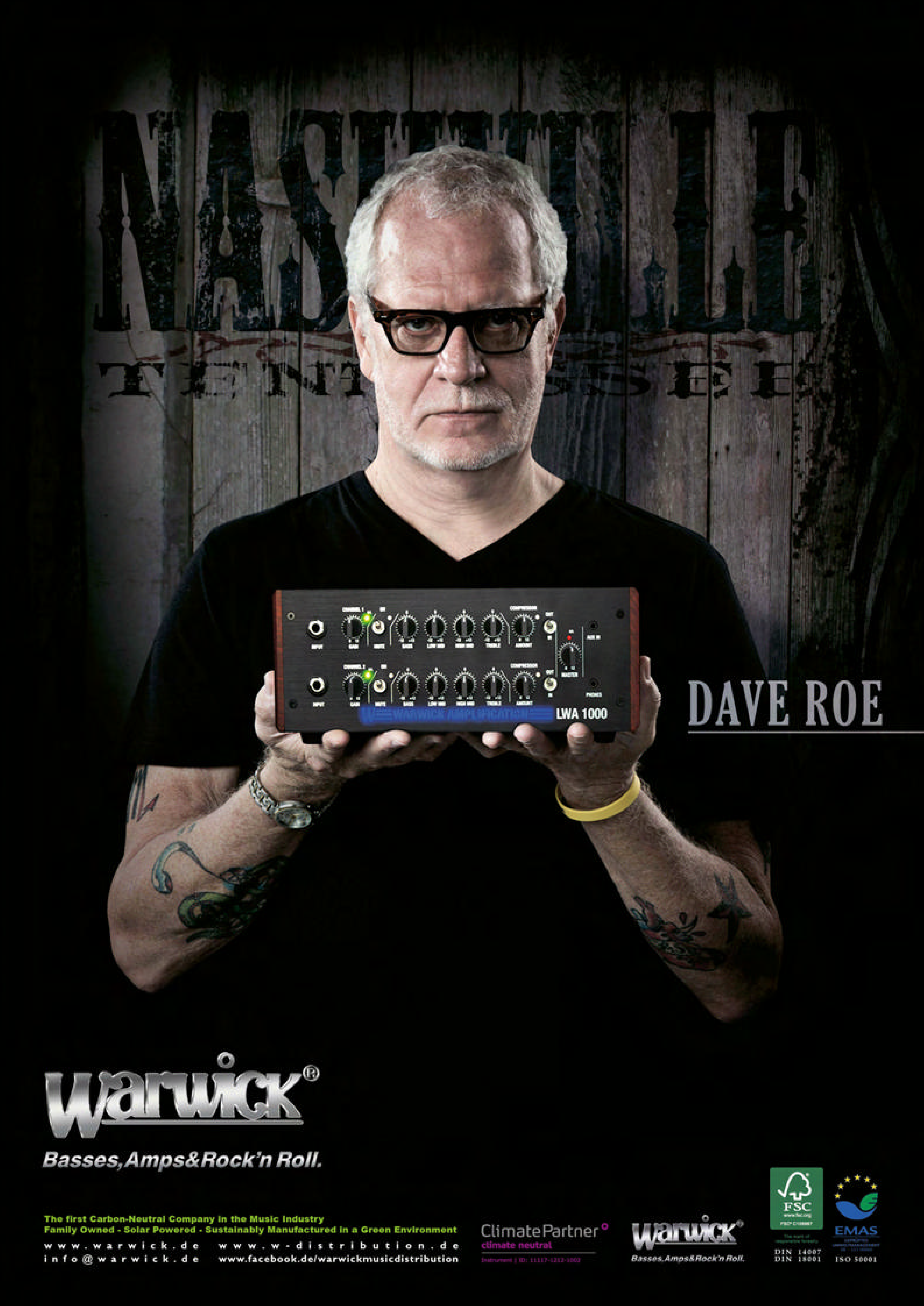
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CONTENTS

ISSUE 112 JANUARY 2014

We're lucky enough here at *BGM*'s secret command bunker to meet many of the world's greatest bass players, but not many of them combine their own tone with a unique style and a worldview that is also entirely their own. Jean-Jacques Burnel is one of this rare breed, making our recent visit to the Stranglers' studio in Somerset a true pleasure – if also slightly scary, given that the great man is also a martial artist of several decades' standing and could easily beat us to a pulp if he chose to. Thankfully he let us live. We're equally delighted with (but less intimidated by) this issue's other interviewees, a splendid crop of bassists from disparate areas of activity ranging from jazz fusion to death metal and beyond, and we also dig deep into the mystery of James Jamerson's missing Fender Precision and the best bass happenings of 2014. All of bass life is here.

And that's before we get into our reviews section, where we cater for bassists of all budgets and requirements. Want a bass head that you can stick into your record bag? Or a £6,000 bass that isn't so much an instrument as a work of art? Look no further. After some useful tuition? We can help there too, with a bass education section that is unparalleled in our humble opinion. Divided into beginner, intermediate and advanced levels, our tuition does everything possible to make you a better bassist. Want to play like Jean-Jacques Burnel? You know where to start. See you at the London Bass Guitar Show on 7 and 8 March...

Joel McIver, Editor

32 Malcolm Bruce

26 John Patitucci

44 Ritter

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Tutorials

60 Front Line Take the advice of our panel of professional bassists if you want to make it in the low-frequency zone

BEGINNER

64 Ellen O'Reilly Beginner's guide Ellen takes us deeper into the modes zone

65 Paul Geary Chord progressions? Our man Geary has them down

INTERMEDIATE

66 Rob Statham Prof Statham looks at comfortable positions. Stop sniggering at the back

68 Alex Webster Webster wangles 16th note groupings. Come on!

ADVANCED

70 Franc O'Shea Advanced theory ninja Franc delivers a beast of a rock solo

74 Philip Mann The great Mann taps like a demon – and so can you

76 Upright Citizen Keep extending those chords, says double bass guru Etheridge

78 Mike Brooks Brooksy instructs you how to get pub gigs for your covers band

80 Steve Lawson 'Amp modelling' is Lawson's middle name. Not literally

Gear

40 Alusonic Hybrid Alberto Rigoni Signature 5 Wait! This thing's made of metal... Joel McIver saddles up this Italian stallion

44 Ritter Cora Late Lounge 4 Six grand's worth of luxury low notes, reviewed by Mike Brooks

48 Barefaced Super Compact Cab Kev Sanders gets to grips with this new Brit-box

51 TC Electronic BH800 The great Danes' latest micro-amp, tested by Ian Glasper

54 Creation Audio Labs Holy Fire Is the Holy Fire overdrive what you need to give your bass some Gothic grind, asks Kev Sanders

57 Essential Rig Chris Hanby hails the painful-sounding Lovetone Ring Stinger

Bassists

20 Jean-Jacques Burnel, Stranglers With his unique tone and playing style, JJ Burnel is a bassist like no other. As his legendary band reaches a turning-point, Joel McIver asks JJ about his career, his new Shuker bass and how his approach to his instrument ties in with his fearsome martial arts prowess...

26 John Patitucci Andy Hughes quizzes the mighty 'Tooch on jazz fusion

30 The Best Of 2014 We asked you for your bass highlights of the year – and you gave us some amazing, and also unexpected, answers...

32 Malcolm Bruce Jack's son talks life at the bass end

34 Tobin Esperance, Papa Roach Metal guru Tobin brings the low notes with Ellen O'Reilly

36 The Funk Machine Ben Cooper meets the makers of a new documentary focusing on James Jamerson's lost Fender P

38 Victor Brandt, Entombed AD Death metal monster Victor reveals the secrets behind the big sounds

SUBSCRIBE NOW
DETAILS PAGE 72

THE LOW DOWN

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BASS WORLD, COLLATED BY BGM'S TEAM OF INTREPID NEWSHOUNDS

SHOW TIME

The London Bass Guitar Show, in association with this hallowed magazine, is delighted to announce world-class bass performances from **Billy Sheehan** and **Lee Rocker**. What more can be said about these amazing bass players that readers don't know already? Billy has earned his place at the top of the rock bass tree with decades of extraordinary technique demonstrations on record, on stage and in instructional videos, while Lee is the rockabilly king thanks to his pioneering double bass work with the Stray Cats. Together with the previously-announced performers **Mark King** and **Divinity Roxx**, the LBGS is shaping up to be the bass event of the year – yet again! In other news, we're delighted to welcome **Proel** International and their **Cort** line of basses, plus Midlands bass dealers extraordinaire **Bass Direct,** and the mighty **Elixir Strings** to the show. There are plenty more artists and exhibitors to be confirmed as show time approaches, so keep checking in for updates at www.londonbassguitarshow.com, wwww.facebook.com/londonbassguitarshow and @bassguitarshow.
See you there!

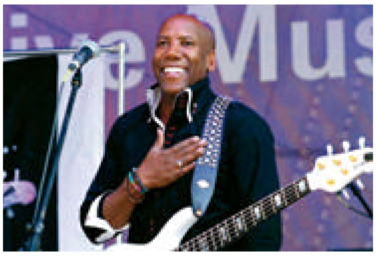
WINDS OF BASS

Alan Mair, bassist with the Only Ones, releases his debut solo single 'Four Winds' on December 19. Alan's first group, the Beatstalkers, were once hailed as 'Scotland's first boy band', and since his early years as a bassist he's amassed a mighty store of anecdotes. One of these includes an occasion at Alan's boot shop in Kensington market in London, when Alan gave David Bowie a pair of boots he couldn't afford and had his shop manager Freddy Mercury fit them for him. You don't see that every day, eh?
Info: www.alanmair.com

SIMS HITS 20

Martin Sims of Sims Custom and Enfield Guitars writes: "This November, Sims Custom officially turned 20 years old. I remember driving to our very first music show with my wife Nicola: there was a lot to take in and get to grips with, as we had no idea of what to expect. I had been fitting LEDs to bass fingerboards through the night to have something to show people, but the days went by and no one called for quite some time. One day, to my total surprise, a bass arrived with a note asking me to fit LEDs to it: after duly fitting said LEDs and sending the bass back to the customer, I called him up. "Hi! Just checking how you're getting on with your new LEDs?" Holding my breath, I heard the words, "Yeah, fine. I've got another one for you!" and so it went on. Our first magazine shoot with *Bassist* magazine followed, where Roger Newall, deputy editor of said mag, wrote a lovely article. From the very day that issue went on sale in WH Smiths I've been working with guitars and basses. A big thank you to Paul Railton for kickstarting a business with his undying belief, Roger Newall for promoting a business with his fine words, and my wife Nicola for keeping a business going over all this time!"
Info: www.simscustom.com

EASTWARD HO



The NAMM Foundation will be inducting the renowned bassist Nathan East into the NAMM TEC Awards Hall of Fame in January at the annual winter event in Anaheim, California. As readers will know, East has worked with musicians from Daft Punk, Eric Clapton, George Harrison, Beyoncé, Phil Collins and Michael Jackson to Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, over more than 2000 recordings. The NAMM TEC Awards were created (it says here) to recognise the individuals, companies and technical innovations behind the sound of recordings, live performances, films, television, video games, and other media. Congrats to Nathan, who will be appearing on our cover in the spring.

Info: www.tecfoundation.com

THOMAS AND GEORGE MARTIN VIOLIN MAKERS

Thomas and George Martin Violin Makers is looking to recruit a bass guitar luthier.

Thomas and George Martin Violin Makers is a family-run business based in Oxfordshire. Thomas started making basses 30 years ago, producing 150 instruments independently before beginning to work with his son, George, and eventually changing the label inside each bass to reflect this. With 12 years of experience making basses, George expanded the business and now employs eight people. "We produce around 40 to 50 new double basses a year," says George. "We also carry out a huge number of highly detailed restoration projects as well as set up and repair work. Many of the world's top bass players use our instruments and come to us for adjustments and set up work. Rather than use CNC machines, all our basses are handmade."

Wishing to explore a new avenue of growth, George knew that three of his workers played guitar and began to research the potential of branching out into this sister market. "We have a huge supply of beautiful wood and a workshop equipped with every tool you could need to produce amazing bass guitars. We feel that with our expertise we could offer bass guitars made to an exceptional standard, taking custom bass-making to another level."

"Making bass guitars seems like a natural progression and is something that the whole team is really excited about."

Info: www.thomasmartin.co.uk

RAMONES BASS EN ROUTE

The career of the late Dee Dee Ramone, born Douglas Colvin, is being celebrated with a Fender Signature Precision and a photo exhibition devoted to him at the Hotel Chelsea Storefront Gallery at 222 West 23rd Street in New York City from 10 December to 1 January. The launch of this exhibit will include a preview of the Fender, plus Dee Dee's art, writings fashions and iconic photographs.

Info: www.deedeeramone.com

Triumvirate

We select three essential albums from a genre or player.
THIS MONTH: Jack Bruce

1 *SONGS FOR A TAILOR* BY JACK BRUCE

Jack's debut solo album performed well, though couldn't match the success of Cream's albums. Nonetheless, for bassists it's a treat from start to finish. Check out the raspy funk groove on 'Never Tell Your Mother She's Out Of Tune', which kicks the album off in fine style. The melodic intro to 'Tickets To Water Falls' is followed up by a meandering line that traverses the fretboard with ease.

2 *WHEELS OF FIRE* BY CREAM

This double album saw Cream moving into progressive territory, with their jazz influences there for all to see. The simple but on-the-money line on 'White Room' is note perfect, while the muscular, creeping riffs of 'Politician' mimic the underhand nature of the lyrics. The band's cover of 'Born Under A Bad Sign' features some fine slow blues grooving from Jack. A stone cold classic.

3 *WHY DONTCHA* BY WEST, BRUCE & LAING

Jack always knew how to put a supergroup together, and this power trio was no exception. 'Why Dontcha' sounds like a bluesier version of Kiss, and Jack's bass, with its melodic fills, arpeggios and driving pulse, is the centre of the track. It continues with the bubbling groove on 'Turn Me Over', the slow, greasy riff on 'Shake Ma Thing' and more. A blues-rock gem.

SNAKES ALIVE

Anaconda have announced a new model, the 'Super J', which will be available at the London Bass Guitar Show. Luthier Andrew Taylor-Cummings tells us, "The Super J4 is our take on a classic, with a downsized and more sculpted body. This is a passive-only bass and incorporates the Stellartone Tonestyler control for a huge range of excellent passive tones. High-end features like a five-piece neck are standard. The four-string has pickups in standard Jazz configuration and the five-string has pickups in Anaconda ToneZones. Coil switching further enhances the huge range of tones available from these basses."

Info: www.anacondabasses.co.uk

DIRECT LINES

Bass Direct have been in touch, suggesting that readers head to their YouTube channel, where you'll find over 100 videos dedicated to killer bass equipment. New stock at the Leamington-based store include products from Darkglass, Vanderkley, Dingwall and Elrick.

Info: www.bassdirect.co.uk.

Me And My Bass

In which a *BGM* reader tells us about his or her bass gear...
This month: Doug Heede, Sinister Flynn

Sinister Flynn are a seven-piece skunk-rock band, smack in the face! What's skunk rock? A bit of ska, a bit of funk and a whole lot of rock. I play Spector basses, mainly Euro 4s, but I also use a Rex Brown four-string, a ReBop 5DLX five-string and a NS2000/5. I've recently got back into BC Riches, which I played in the 90s. Terrible balance, but they look great! My effects are a Boss ME-50B multi-effects unit and a Behringer BDI21 DI box. Amp-wise, I use an Aguilar Tone Hammer 350 into two Hartke HyDrive 112 12" bass cabinets. They're super light and portable, which is a necessity because the rest of the band disappear when you need gear moved, like cockroaches when you turn on a light. I also use a Brace DWG 1000 digital wireless – a really great, reasonably-priced digital wireless system that sadly isn't made any more. I play fingerstyle and slap: our songs incorporate a lot of tones from thick reggae to grinding rock, so I tend to change my playing style to get the right feel with the occasional bit of help from the bass's EQ. Our album, *The Revenge Of Meathook Murphy*, is available for download from iTunes, streaming from Spotify and from our website www.sinisterflynn.com.

Want to be in this column? Email joel@blazepublishing.co.uk

WIN!

Thanks to the splendid chaps at up-and-coming guitar makers Fender, we have a CB100 CE acoustic bass to give away. Retailing at over £200, this tasty instrument will make a perfect first acoustic or backup bass for those unplugged moments, and you can snag it by answering this laughably easy question:

'Fender' is American for what?
A The panel over a car's wheel arch
B The thing on the front of trains that catches cows
C The bit of an aeroplane behind the propeller

Answers to the usual email and postal addresses by 27 January.

WON!

Megadeth bassist David Ellefson's autobiography goes in audiobook format to Ross Sutherland, Mhelissa Anna Dorado and Jeremy Lambert. Thanks to all who entered.

THE MIGHTY HÖF

Höfner have just released two new 'Eco'-branded German-built limited edition models of their famous Violin Bass. Both use a composite material on the fingerboard as an eco-friendly option. Colour options include an Ivory model offered with a blue fingerboard. Crazy, eh? You're looking at €2430 for one of these tasty basses, which we'll be reviewing shortly. Supplied with a Höfner bullet case, both models are available to order from Höfner dealers now.

Info: www.hofner.com

Revolver

Every month we tell you the bass-line we can't stop listening to

THIS MONTH: 'Jungle Boogie'

Bassist: *Robert 'Kool' Bell*
Album: *Wild And Peaceful by Kool & the Gang*
This monster hit from Kool & the Gang's breakthrough album is their enduring claim to fame. Featured on endless soundtracks and played relentlessly at funk and disco nights around the world, it's a classic and no mistake. 'Kool' laid down one of his funkiest grooves for this. Like all good funk bass, it's not about the notes but the timing, with the snaking chorus line playing off the punctuated verse riff. On the one!

EVERY MONTH MASTER RESTORER SIMON MCVEIGH TWEAKS A KNACKERED OLD FENDER MUSICMASTER INTO A THING OF BEAUTY. THIS MONTH SIMON DIVES INTO THE PICKUPS

Simon McVeigh has been a session bassist for over 20 years, and works as a bass tutor at the Royal County School of Music in County Meath, Ireland. He has recorded with many artists and runs www.breadheadmusic.com, a contacts resource for professionals in the music industry.

The first step is to change this Musicmaster's pickup from the standard Stratocaster unit that came with this bass when it rolled out of the factory in 1978. In my opinion, the Strat pickup was just not capable of giving this bass the sound that it is capable of – and that it deserves to have.

These little basses are an absolute joy to play: they're not only the domain of guitar players who are dipping their toes into the bass world, or for bassists of small stature. In fact it's quite the opposite, there are many high-profile players, both male and female, out there who use these and other short-scale basses, Bill Wyman and Tina Weymouth among them.

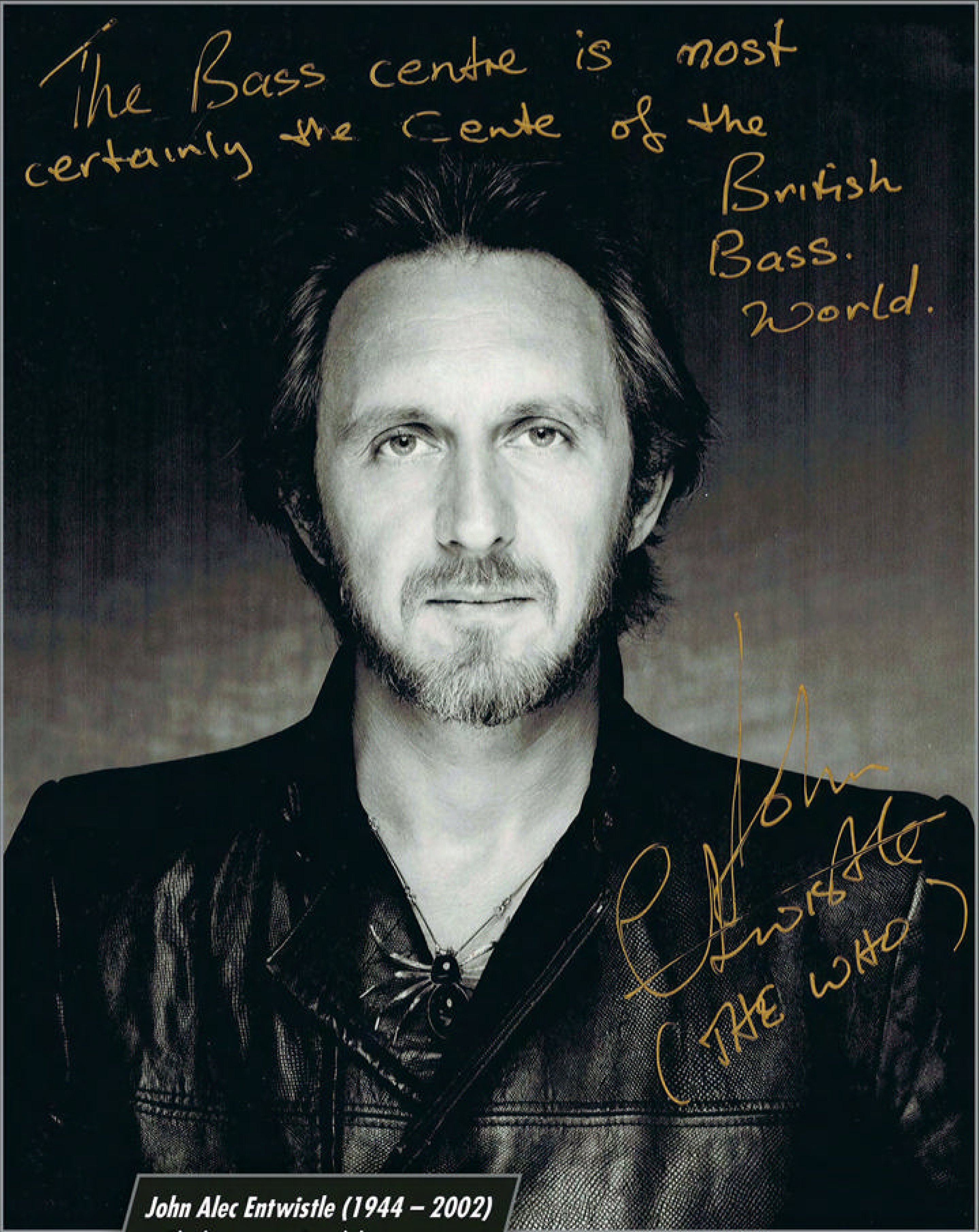
Now, I am a real fan of short-scale basses. They are light, easy to get around, and they look really funky. I am a big advocator of making any instrument play as comfortably as possible. If you're going to play at the top of your game for two hours or more every night, then your bass has to feel comfortable. This will make the experience enjoyable for the player and in turn, the audience.

I really want to avoid ruining the aesthetic of this bass, which limits me to replacing the pickup with one that will fit the current cavity in the pickguard, as I don't want to do any cutting. The new pickup unit that I have chosen for this bass is a Seymour Duncan SCPB-3 Quarter-Pounder, which should give me the depth and tone that I am looking for. To install it, I unscrewed the pickguard, and flipped it over to see that there were two wires coming from the pickup. A word of advice: in this situation, take a quick photo of where the wires are connected: this will help you later.

Don't be tempted to cut any wires: always de-solder any connection you want to remove. The pick up will be attached to the pickguard by two screws, so unscrew these and release it. Keep everything that you remove from your bass. Don't throw anything away, as you will need it at some stage. Take this opportunity to clean your tone and volume pots, which might have become a bit crackly over the years.

Next time I will be reseating the new pickup in its optimum position and getting this fine bass back on the road.

Seymour Duncan pickup £50
Bass cost: £490
Total: £540
Contact: simonmcveigh@eircom.net



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GEAR

BASSES Fender Jazz Select
EFFECTS Boss Distortion, Line6 Bass Pod
AMPS Peavey TNT 115

MARK HAMON, KITTEN PYRAMID

I played a five-string Yamaha for many years and also own a seven-string fretless, but I found that my four-string Jazz is all I ever pick up and play. It has all the versatility and tone I need. I feel four strings are more natural. The secret of playing bass is loving what you play. I practise on my own before rehearsals at double speed, sometimes with my entire body covered with oven-dried apricot halves and frozen prawns in the full glory of the moon, ideally by a deep, restless stretch of river. This quickens my fingers and accuracy so when I'm at rehearsals, I play at the correct tempo and find so much more space to explore. My first bass was an old Epiphone sunburst something or other. Not sure what the model was. In fact, I'm not sure what happened to it. It's possibly in the back of some cupboard somewhere, or in a park drinking cheap cider that has never seen an apple, or maybe married with two little ukuleles. Who really knows? My favourite bass ever is my new Fender Jazz Select, named Carrie Fisher. This is the Christmas dinner of basses. A gold-plated, diamond-ensconced, freshly bleached porn star of a bass. If this bass was made into a cream, I would rub it on my knees. The first bass that really made me sit up and listen? Chris Squire. *Fragile* by Yes. The bass tone is face-slapping. The bass does not sink back into the background as many did: it drives forward. It was rich from high to low end. The track 'Roundabout' forced the bass down your ear and made you listen. Not only that, it's wonderful to hear the slight imperfections that pre-digital recording had. Chris Squire's use of the bass, for me, is the one that made me really take notice of the instrument. We're bracing ourselves for our debut album launch at the end of April.

www.kittenpyramid.co.uk

"MY FAVOURITE BASS EVER IS MY NEW FENDER JAZZ SELECT, NAMED CARRIE FISHER. THIS IS THE CHRISTMAS DINNER OF BASSES. A GOLD-PLATED, DIAMOND-ENSCONCED, FRESHLY BLEACHED PORN STAR OF A BASS"

GEAR

BASSES Fender Jazz, Ibanez Custom ATK
EFFECTS MXR Bass Compressor, Tech 21 Sansamp Bass Drivers, Ibanez Tube Screamer, Saturnworks passive splitter, Boss NS-2 Noise Suppressor, Boss TU-3 tuners, MXR Bass DI
AMPS Various

JOSH GILBERT, WOVENWAR

I stick to four strings because I've yet to encounter a time where I've needed the extended range above or below what the four strings can offer me. For lower tunings such as drop C, I usually use a .125 gauge string from a five-string set to compensate for the lack of tension. In my band in particular, the bass's place in things is more mechanical, and complementary to the guitars. While I venture out from time to time with melodic flourishes, in a guitar-driven band, the name of the game is taste. The secret of playing bass well is consistent attack, be it fingerstyle or picked, and locking into the groove. Also, a healthy amount of midrange. My favourite bass ever to date is my Fender Geddy Lee Jazz. For a number of reasons (1970s pickup placement, Leo Quan Badass Bridge, body/neck material), this bass has an ungodly amount of growl, yet is low-output enough to be utilised well with overdrive. I've owned three other Jazz models, as well as a number of Ibanez ATK/Soundgear custom basses, but for my preferred tone style, no bass can match its aggression and clarity. I always replace the stock pick guard with black, though (note to Fender design team).

www.wovenwar.com

GEAR
BASSES Warwick Custom Thumb
EFFECTS Sansamp, Rat distortion, Boss delay
AMPS Warwick 600, Warwick 4x10 and 15 cabs

GUSTAVO AUED, POWERMAN 5000

I'm aggressive on stage, which I guess comes through my bass playing but I always keep in mind enhancing the band's sound. I play five-string Warwick basses, because of the lower range and the filling up of sound that it provides. Finding the right tone helped me give PM5K that low end and growl that we were looking for. I slap, but not in PM5K. This is one of my main techniques as a player. Growing up I always loved funk and the groove you can create playing bass along with drums. If you lay down a great groove with drums you sometimes don't need anything else – guess that's the bass player in me. The secret of playing bass well is practice, and then more practice. When you are done then do it again. Joking aside, I also think playing bass is about understanding what the need for the band is that you are playing in. The greatest player that ever lived was Jaco Pastorius. He brought bass playing to the forefront and did things on the bass that no one had thought about. Chris Wolstenhome of Muse is my favourite bass player right now. If you want to hear tone and groove done by playing one note, 'Starlight' is the one. Being able to make a song sound like that with one note and being able to have growl, groove and tone is pretty amazing.
www.powerman5000.com

OMER AVITAL, OMER AVITAL QUINTET

I feel that four strings are enough for me. The secret of playing bass well is loving the low end. My bass heroes are Jimmy Blanton, Charles Mingus, Oscar Pettiford, Ray Brown, Paul Chambers, Sam Jones, and Scott Lafaro. If I could get the bass tone of any album ever released, I would choose *Mingus Mingus Mingus Mingus Mingus*. We have a new CD out, *New Song*.
www.omeravital.com

GEAR
BASSES John Juzek double bass from 1933
EFFECTS None
AMPS Whatever

GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision
EFFECTS None
AMPS Marshall valve head, Ampeg 8x10 cabs

COLIN FENNELLY, KERBDOG

I use a Fender Precision through a Marshall valve head and Ampeg 8x10 cabs. I used to have a great Ampeg SVTII valve head, which served me well for many years. It weighed a tonne. It sadly passed away last year. No pedals for me. The sound I get through the valve amp does the job nicely. I don't do slap bass. It doesn't work for our type of music and I can't do it anyway. I really admire the likes of Les Claypool, of course, who carries it off really well. The secret to playing any instrument well is to play the music you love. Simple. I can't remember my first bass. It was cheap and nasty. I do know that. I think I bought it from a friend at school. My favourite bass is my current one: my Fender P. It has served me well for over 15 years. I had a great Music Man a while ago as well, which was lovely to play! My bass heroes? I love the style of Bob Weston (Shellac) and David Sims (Jesus Lizard). I also like the way Lou Barlow played bass in Dinosaur Jr. – a nice distorted sound.
www.kerbdog.com

GEAR
BASSES Ernie Ball Music Man Stingray 5 HH, Sennheiser G3 wireless
EFFECTS Tech 21 SansAmp Bass Driver Deluxe pedal, Tech 21 Boost Bass Chorus pedal, Tech 21 Bass Boost Fuzz
AMPS Tech 21 B410-VT bass cabinets

ADAM WOLOSZYN, NONPOINT

I would describe my bass style as rhythmic. I like to accent the drum pattern of the song. I often use octaves, either low or high, so I can still hit the root notes of the guitar riff but change it up a bit. I play five-string basses. I have one six-string at home for fun. Slapping isn't needed for Nonpoint songs, but I do throw in some thumb action live when I get too excited. There's a section in the live version of the song 'Rabia' where I do some slapping and popping. The secret

> "THE GREATEST BASS PLAYER THAT EVER LIVED HAS TO BE JOHN PAUL JONES OF LED ZEPPELIN. HIS PLAYING WAS A BIG INFLUENCE. PLUS THE MAN CAN PLAY PRETTY MUCH ANY INSTRUMENT OUT THERE"

of playing bass well is following the drums. It's the rhythm section, so embrace it. My first bass was an Epiphone P-Bass knockoff. Its the only four-string I've ever owned but its the bad boy who kicked it all off. My favourite bass ever is my current red and black Stingray 5 HH with a maple fretboard. It's just perfect. The greatest bass player that ever lived has to be John Paul Jones of Led Zeppelin. His playing was a big influence. Plus the man can play pretty much any instrument out there. We have our job to do in the band as part of the rhythm section and the backbone but, once that is covered, we are free to add in whatever our creative minds can achieve. Most of the listeners will probably never hear those nuances and extra notes, but other bassists will and that is glorious. Our new album *The Return* is out: come on out to a show, let loose and bang your head with me.

www.nonpoint.com

GEAR
BASSES Custom Rosado Super P, Fender Custom Shop P-Bass Deluxe, Fender Fretless Jazz Bass, Spector Euro4LX, Warwick Custom Shop Streamer $$ eight-string
EFFECTS Dunlop Crybaby 105Q Bass Wah, Amptweaker Bass TightDrive, MXR M84 Bass Fuzz Deluxe, MXR M288 Bass Octave, MXR M82 Bass Envelope Filter
AMPS Ampeg SVTs and 8X10 cabs, GK 1001RB, Ampeg SVT410-HE

FREDDY VILLANO, AMERICAN MAFIA

I've always been more into players who play bass, like James Jamerson, Boz Burrell, Andy Fraser, John Paul Jones, Geezer Butler and Bernard Edwards than the virtuosos. That probably stems from being more into great songs than virtuosic playing. I am as influenced by the singer-songwriter Charlie Sexton as I am by Geezer Butler. I mostly play four-string bass, but do own and play a five-string and an eight-string. It's out of necessity really, especially when playing power metal and stoner/doom. Bands in those genres, at least the ones I've worked with, like a lot of B, C and C# tuning, so the five-string really accommodates that sound. I had a real epiphany when I realised I could just tune the five-string to a low C or C# when a song was in one of those keys rather than trying to

> "I WILL SLAP IF IT'S SOMETHING I'VE WRITTEN, BUT IT'S NOT NECESSARILY SOMETHING I GRAVITATE TOWARDS IF I'M JAMMING OR IMPROVISING. IT'S MORE OF A SONGWRITING TOOL TO ME THAN PYROTECHNICS"

play it first or second position. I will slap if it's something I've written, but it's not necessarily something I gravitate towards if I'm jamming or improvising. It's more of a songwriting tool to me than pyrotechnics. My favourite bass ever to date is my silver sparkle custom shop Fender P-Bass Deluxe, built by Alex Perez. The greatest bass player that ever lived is Juan Alderete. And I'm not just saying that because he's my friend: he's a pioneer. American Mafia's *Rock N' Roll Hit Machine* is probably my proudest moment. I not only played bass and co-wrote the tunes, but also produced the record.

www.grooveyardrecords.com/americanmafiarocknrollhitmachine.html

GEAR
BASSES Warwick Corvette, Ibanez SR1005 Prestige, D'Addario strings
EFFECTS Boss ME-50B
AMPS SVT4 Pro, SVT-410HE and SVT-18 cabs

JARED STURGIS, CHRYSALIS

I play a five-string bass because I can express myself more. With five strings, a wider array of note combinations is more easily accessible. I slap because it adds flavour to the music. It's always been one of my favourite styles. I try to throw it in the mix whenever it fits a song or part. The secret to playing bass well is to have fun and enjoy yourself. If you're enjoying yourself, then you'll play more, and experiment more. It'll eventually reflect in your performance. I think it's also important to play with other musicians. You can learn a lot by playing with people from different musical backgrounds than your own. My first bass was a four-string Guild straight out of the 1970s. My dad stored it in my closet when I was a kid. After I grew up a little, I found it and started messing around with it. My favourite bass ever to date is the Warwick Thumb. Great look and tone. The craftsmanship is excellent – a work of art. My bass heroes are Les Claypool, Ryan Martinie, Flea, Cliff Burton, and Victor Wooten to name a few. The greatest bass player that ever lived is Flea. I listened to the Chili Peppers a lot growing up. I always admired Flea, and he inspired me to play. I love his aggressive slap and melodic techniques. He knows when to play complex, or when to be subtle. He always complements songs perfectly. Our second album is out now.

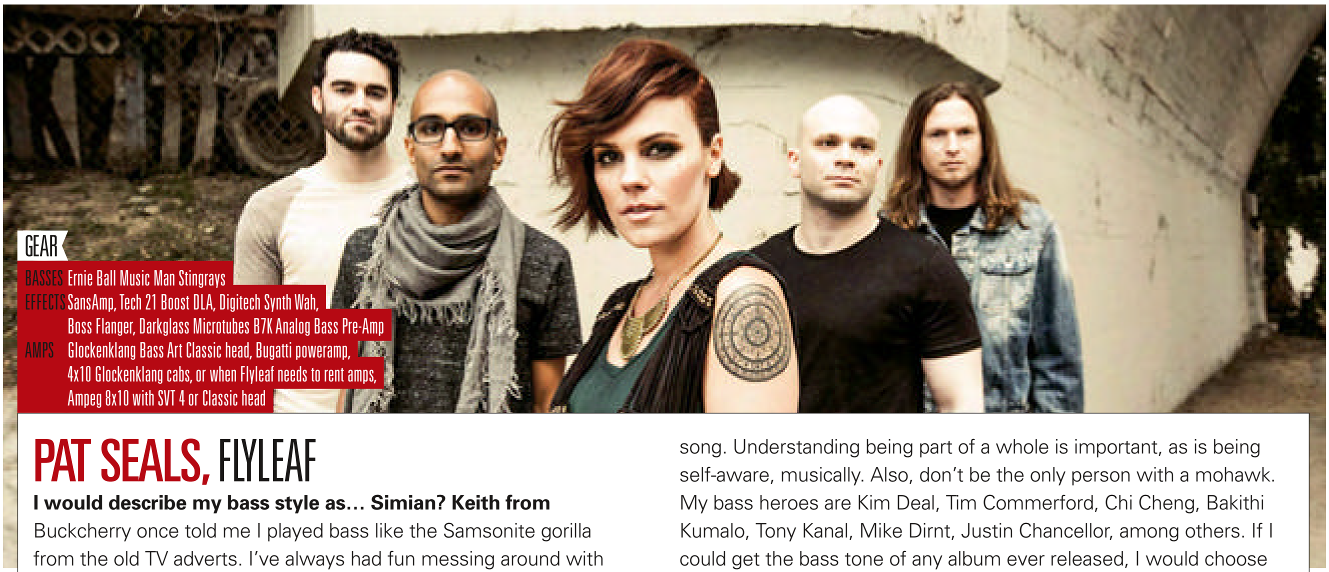
www.chrysalisband.com

GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision with Seymour Duncan Quarter-Pounder pickups
EFFECTS Tech 21 NYC VT
AMPS Gallien Krueger MB200 head, Gallien Krueger 210MBE and 115MBE cabs

JAMES CAMERON, STEAK

I've only got three strings on my bass. By taking off the F string (we play in drop C), it makes it easier to attack the high C a little harder. I can barely use three strings, let alone a five- or six-string bass. I would tend to associate a five- or six-string with technical, complex playing which is really the antithesis of what our genre, stoner rock, is about. I do not slap. What's slap bass? The secret of playing bass well is listening to what the other band members are playing, and picking your moments to stand out and knowing when to sit behind. My first bass was a Squier thing that I bought along with a little Fender amp. I remember snapping the strings frequently when tuning, as I was reading the notes of the strings the wrong way round. If I could get the bass tone of any album ever released, I would choose *Rated R* by Queens Of The Stone Age. Nick Oliveri kills it.

www.facebook.com/steakuk

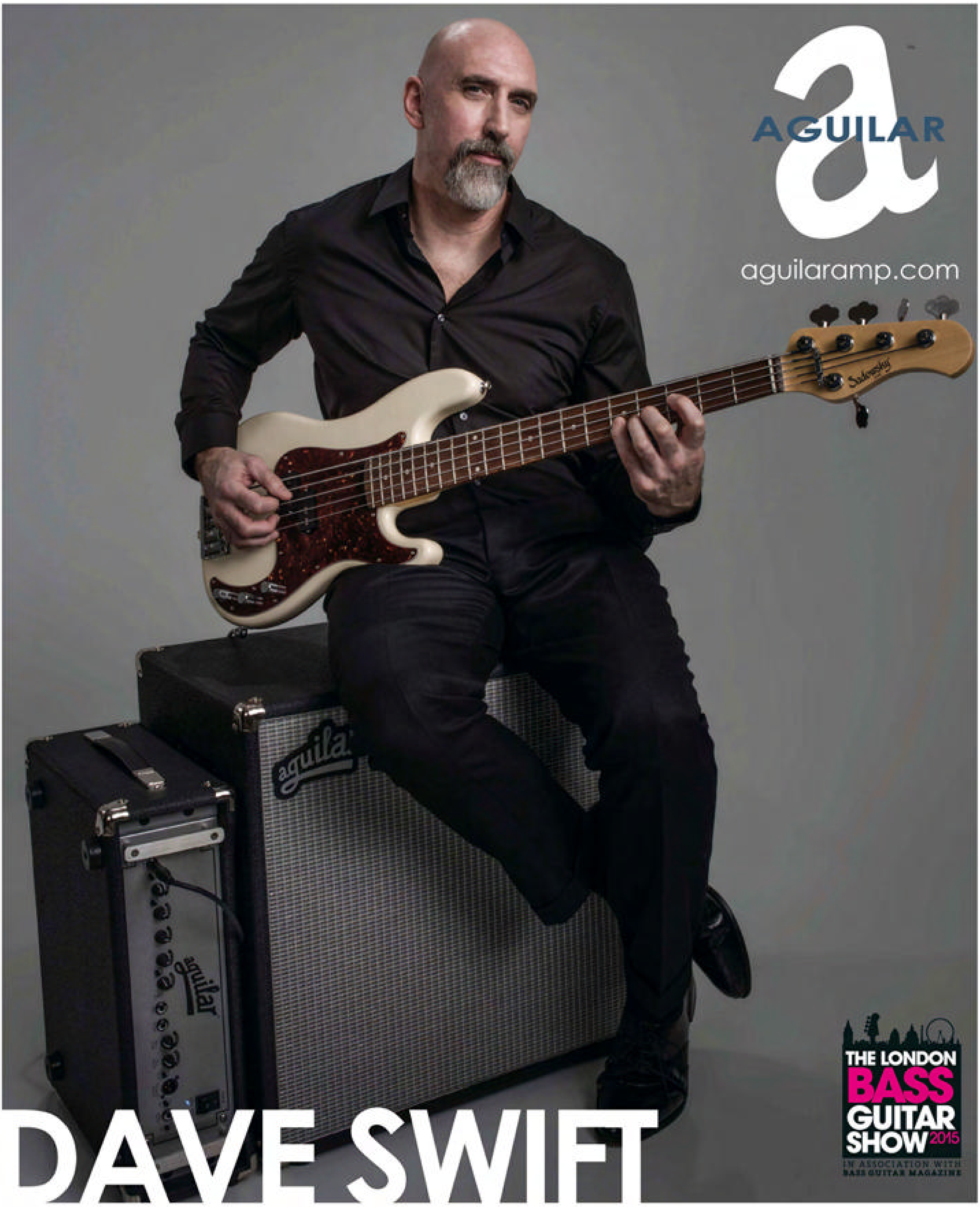


GEAR
BASSES Ernie Ball Music Man Stingrays
EFFECTS SansAmp, Tech 21 Boost DLA, Digitech Synth Wah, Boss Flanger, Darkglass Microtubes B7K Analog Bass Pre-Amp
AMPS Glockenklang Bass Art Classic head, Bugatti poweramp, 4x10 Glockenklang cabs, or when Flyleaf needs to rent amps, Ampeg 8x10 with SVT 4 or Classic head

PAT SEALS, FLYLEAF

I would describe my bass style as… Simian? Keith from Buckcherry once told me I played bass like the Samsonite gorilla from the old TV adverts. I've always had fun messing around with five- and six-string basses, but four seem to get the job done for Flyleaf's material. I do not usually slap in public… You have to wear the bass up all high like a 90s goth choker necklace if you're going to be slapping for more than 10 seconds, and I haven't found a place in Flyleaf quite yet for that skill set. Don't get me wrong, slapping is cool; I actually made some slap attempts in my old band in high school, trying to emulate Flea and P-Nut from 311. Fun times. The secret of playing bass well is getting in where you should fit in, regarding the song. Understanding being part of a whole is important, as is being self-aware, musically. Also, don't be the only person with a mohawk. My bass heroes are Kim Deal, Tim Commerford, Chi Cheng, Bakithi Kumalo, Tony Kanal, Mike Dirnt, Justin Chancellor, among others. If I could get the bass tone of any album ever released, I would choose Justin Chancellor's tone from *Lateralus*, Tool's third album. There's such a spectrum there: classic dirty Tool tone where it needs to be, but then beautifully arresting sections featuring a clean sound, often with a simple part, sometimes swimming in effects. Chancellor's musical and sonic choices consistently exemplify good sound design. Flyleaf is touring in October in support of Between The Stars, our first record with Kristen May. We are looking at coming to the UK soon.

www.flyleafmusic.com



Jools Holland, Joe Bonamassa, Adele,
George Benson, Chaka Khan, BB King,
David Sanborn, Gregory Porter
and well, we could be here all day.......

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GEAR

BASSES Fender Precision with GHS Boomers, Tokai Hardpuncher
EFFECTS Fulltone Fat Boost
AMPS Orange AD-200, Orange cabs

ESPEN LIEN, AUDREY HORNE

No offence, you guys out there in bass land, but six-string basses look a bit silly, and me using a pick while playing makes it difficult to use as well. I am very conservative here, sorry. I still don't know how you guys out there manage to play on these things. Respect – I do not slap. The only thing I slap is my wife's ass, and the occasional fooling around during soundchecks slapping the bass for the hell of it. The secret of playing bass well comes down to rehearsing: the hours you spend practising while you are young is something that will stick to you forever. Of course, try to stay sober when you play live, there is always time to drink beer later. You also need a proper warm-up before you go on stage. Play loud and play proud. The greatest bass player that ever lived was Phil Lynott. He had a sexy tone and style, used a Precision bass, and he could sing at the same time as he played bass. Coolest guy ever. Audrey Horne has just released our fifth studio album worldwide. It's called *Pure Heavy* and it kicks some serious ass.

www.audreyhornemusic.com

> "THE SECRET OF PLAYING BASS WELL COMES DOWN TO REHEARSING: THE HOURS YOU SPEND PRACTISING WHILE YOU ARE YOUNG IS SOMETHING THAT WILL STICK TO YOU FOREVER"

GEAR

BASSES ESP RD 380 with Seymour Duncan Bass Line pickups, Squier Precision with Alembic P/J pickups, Fender (Mexico) Precision with Seymour Duncan Quarter Pounder pickups, Steinberger L2, Rickenbacker 4001, Hoyer T-Stax, Fender Jazz, Hohner B2A
EFFECTS Ibanez (Maxon) CS9 Stereo Chorus, Zoom B2.1u
AMPS Hughes & Kettner BassBase 400, 2x Rocktron Velocity 300 power amps, HK Audio VC1200 power amp and 2x SansAmp Bass DI Drivers, Ampeg SVT, Marshall JMP 100, Engl Straight, Vox AC30, Sessionmaster JD10

DIRK SCHLÄCHTER, GAMMA RAY

I would describe my bass style as outstanding, amazing, incredibly innovating: the best style ever heard. Just kidding, but I would say that I'm flexible in my bass style. I play with fingers, I play with a pick, I love to slap and I'm influenced by all kinds of music. For a bass player I have extremely small hands and that's why playing six-string basses is a pain in the ass. Five-string basses are okay, but I don't really like them. For low tunings I use a four-string bass strung B, E, A, D. That does the trick. I slap, because I absolutely love it. When I started playing bass at the age of 19, slapping was the first style I learned. The secret of playing bass well is playing together with other musicians. My first bass was a Squier Precision built in the 1980s. I put in an active Alembic P/J pickup system and I still use it a lot in the studio today. My favourite bass ever to date is a Hoyer T-Stax with Kent Armstrong pickups built in the 1980s for the Frankfurt Music Fair. I got it from the owner of a local store who took it directly from the fair. At first he didn't wanted to sell it, but about one year later he asked me if I was still interested. Of course I was. My bass heroes? I'm too old for having heroes. The bass players who influenced me when I started playing were Mark King, Stanley Clarke, John Entwistle, Steve Harris and Colin Hodgkinson.

www.gammaray.org

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BURN BABY BURNEL

JEAN-JACQUES BURNEL IS THAT RARE BASSIST – A PLAYER WITH HIS OWN TONE, HIS OWN PLAYING STYLE AND HIS OWN PHILOSOPHY. JOEL MCIVER VISITS STRANGLERS HQ AND ASKS THE BIG MAN THE BIG QUESTIONS

Photography: Tina K

shukerguitars.co.uk

If you're ever invited to the Stranglers' remote studio in the middle of Somerset, you'll witness the sights and sounds of a thoroughly modern organisation. The complex is surrounded by massive fields – and the quickest road there passes through a bizarre tollbooth, where dead-eyed locals emerge and demand money – but once you're there, you enter a zone containing a full recording studio, rehearsal rooms, a spacious management and record company office and plenty of friendly staff.

Head across the courtyard to one of the rehearsal rooms where a particularly massive, distorted bass tone is rocking the rafters, and you'll encounter Jean-Jacques Burnel, a serious-looking chap who looks like he could beat you up quite easily if he wanted to. Settled down with a cup of tea and his spanking new Shuker signature P-Bass on his lap, though, JJ (as we'll call him and save the writer's typing fingers) is the epitome of affability, laughing at the many exploits that he and his band have endured over the decades and discussing his gear with great enthusiasm.

None other than Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, a man who knows what tricky bass playing is, once described JJ as the best bass player in the world. With that in mind, when he plugs the Shuker into the tasty-looking Ashdown rig behind him, we ask JJ if he ever finds some of the Stranglers' bass parts technically challenging.

"Sometimes, yes," he replied, demonstrating a tricky line made up of descending triplets, "but that's usually because they cross over the rhythms of the vocals that I sing. Funnily enough, that was one of the reasons why Jon Shuker and I decided on a much lighter body for my new bass. I prefer to stand up rather than sitting down when I'm rehearsing,

Bassists who impressed JJ...

Andy Fraser

"When I was 14 or 15, my parents – who were French – had a restaurant in Godalming near Guildford, and there was a pub there called the Angel which ran a blues night every Sunday. I was smuggled in by my older friends and I saw Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac, and Free before they were called Free. I saw Andy Fraser break an E string, and he was a finger-picker – I was seriously impressed! I was privileged to be there."

Jack Bruce

"We used to listen to *Disraeli Gears* all the time. I loved Jack Bruce's bass playing and I still do. All the bassists I've mentioned are quite dominant players: they fight for their own space at the front. I'm all for playing interesting things on the bass, as you know, but the bass part has to be the right one for what the rest of the band are doing. As long as the bass-line complements the song, I'm all for it: I'm convinced that every generation of musicians brings a new rhythm to the fore, and the song remains intact."

John Entwistle

"The solo on 'My Generation' was the first I ever saw. I can only do it with a pick, and I wonder if he did too, because he normally used his fingers. Let's not forget Ray Brown, Paul Chambers and Harvey Brooks, who played the electric bass parts on Miles Davis' *Bitches Brew*. I've nicked the sound for the Stranglers, although I don't play the funky stuff."

especially because I have to co-ordinate the vocal lines I'm talking about, which go across the rhythm. Our rehearsal times have been getting longer and longer, and the weight of the old bass was becoming an issue on my back and shoulders. For a two-hour gig, the weight of a Fender Precision or whatever isn't a problem, because I'm moving around all the time, but when I'm standing still in front of a mic, four or five hours is a killer!"

For years a Fender player, JJ switched to Shuker some years ago on being recommended to the British luthier by the Stranglers' guitarist Baz Warne. He continues, "The new Shuker is beautiful: I've never seen anything like the finish on it on a bass guitar. It weighs seven and a half pounds: the horns are slightly hollowed and they create resonance. It's a mix of three or four different woods, plus there's carbon fibre around the mahogany neck. The finish on the fingerboard is beautiful, it's a master grade birdseye maple. It's as strokable as a cat! I don't know if it'll bite you, though... Everything has been designed to make it lighter but more resonant. It's kicking out more power, even though it's a passive bass, because one of the Armstrong family made a custom pickup. He's done an amazing job. I'll be playing it live next year."

> **"STAY LOYAL, KEEP THE SAMURAI SPIRIT, IMPROVE YOUR CHARACTER, BE POLITE TO OTHERS, TRAIN YOUR MIND AND BODY, LIVE IN A SIMPLE WAY"**

As for the Ashdown rig glowing quietly away behind us, JJ explains: "It's my signature head, the JJB-500. Ashdown have been really great to me. It's loud... very loud! There's a lot of crunch in the tone, although a lot of that comes from the way I play. That's where the distorted sound came from originally, although I like to have a bit of distortion on the amp when I need to. Not every song needs that, of course, but the Stranglers bass sound is basically a bit distorted."

It is indeed, and to find out why, let's look back a bit. Our man, born in 1952, started his career as a classical guitarist before switching to bass in time for the formation of the Stranglers in 1974. Since then he's been a constant presence in the band, who were way too musically adept to sit comfortably with the late-70s punk wave but who shared every bit of the punks' gobby attitude.

The band – for many years JJ plus singer/guitarist Hugh Cornwell, keyboard player Dave Greenfield and drummer Jet Black – coalesced a while back into JJ, Greenfield, Warne and Black, the last of whom splits drum duties on stage with Jim Macaulay. You've heard the hits, culled from no fewer than 17 albums to date – 'Peaches', 'No More Heroes', 'Nice 'N' Sleazy', 'Golden Brown', 'Skin Deep' and tons more. Along the way JJ made two solo albums in 1979 and 1988, released a collaboration with Greenfield in 1983, produced a whole bunch of bands and acquired fearsome dexterity as a karate expert, gaining a sixth dan in the discipline. He's been a busy man.

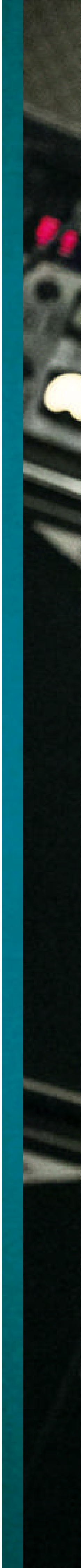
That distorted bass tone came from necessity, recalls JJ. "When we started out, Hugh had a battered old Vox AC30 amp which was fucked," he chuckles. "Initially I had some kind of transformer amp, which was probably used for model railways, and then I had a HiWatt guitar amp – because I didn't know the difference – and a big 18" speaker, which was horrible."

Hence the overdriven speaker, hence the distorted sounds. The story behind JJ's bass tone is pretty well known even outside bass guitar circles, at least partly because it comes from the same DIY spirit that drove the wider music scene back then. "We just had what we could get our hands on," he adds. "The semi-pro musicians we knew, who were working at the local music store, all had 20 pedals and brand-new guitars, Gibson this and Fender that, plus the latest haircut with the long sideburns and the pink shirts. This was the early 70s, remember. They had the semi-pro moustaches, as we called them. We took the piss out of them because they had all this stuff and they still didn't cut it: they were weekend warriors."

JJ tells the story of the 'Peaches' riff, one of the most famous bass intros ever. After an evening in front of a reggae sound system, with its associated stimulants ("They were just talking a stream of consciousness over a bass and drums, and of course there was a lot of grass being passed around!"), he came up with the unmistakeable sequence of notes, explaining: "I wanted the bass to be dominant, and that's how it turned out. I play quite hard with a pick, and the roundwound Rotosounds I use make that particular sound."

On 2015 tour dates, JJ will be taking out his tried-and-tested Shuker, Rotosound and Ashdown gear out with him, plus a backup bass. "I'll take out two, because I expect them to be reliable. If a change in sound is needed on stage, I'll do it myself, or they'll do it out front if I need subsonics." When we tell him that we often encounter bass players who take a whole bunch of basses out on tour with different tunings, string configurations and so on, he laughs and replies: "I've got two main sounds, pick and fingers – and between those I can cover anything that I need. If people have eight-string basses, that's fine, but the reason I started bass was because it had two less strings than a normal guitar, for fuck's sake. I'm a happy bunny with four strings, you know."

When we speak to JJ, he's just about to head to Japan for a month's karate. How do his advanced martial arts influence his bass playing, we ask? After all, when you reach his level of expertise, we've read that the discipline becomes all-encompassing. "We start off every class with what they call the *dojo kun*, the oath: the principles that keep the samurai spirit," he says. "These basically mean staying loyal and never giving up, which the Japanese really don't like doing. It's dishonourable, and because they believe in spirit



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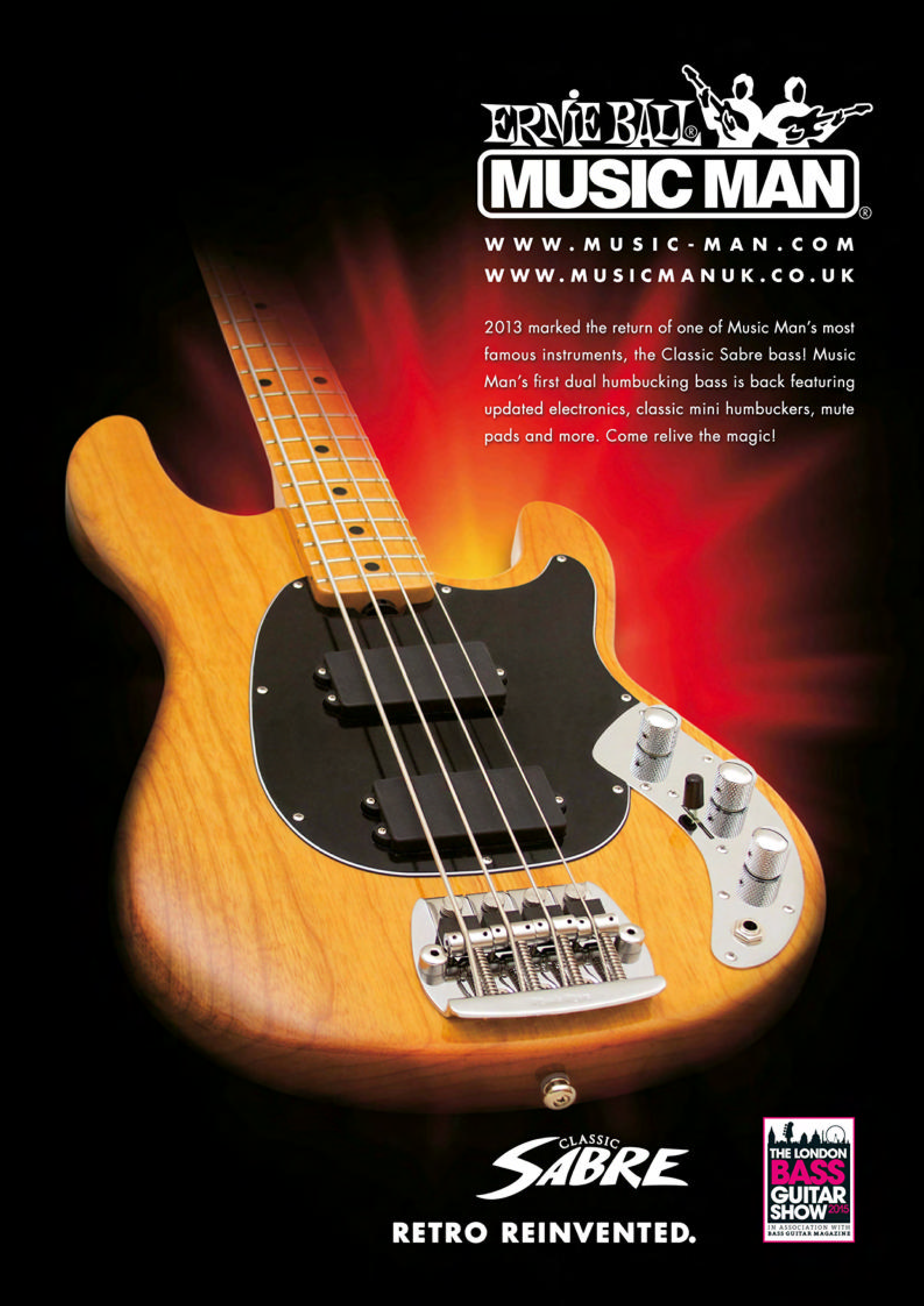
worship, giving up dishonours your family. That's why you find Japanese soldiers in the jungle 40 years after World War II finished, and they admire marathon races for the same reason: it doesn't matter if you come last, just don't give up."

He continues: "It's a useful focus, especially when you're in a rock'n'roll band, but in any walk of life. It allows me to be myself and just be honest and not have to hide behind an image or anything. So you stay loyal, keep the samurai spirit, improve your character, be polite to others, train your mind and body, live in a simple way – in other words, don't be ostentatious – love all mankind, respect providence, and don't go looking for trouble."

Surely heading to Japan for a month of martial arts is looking for trouble, we quip? "Well, I don't know if I'll actually be fighting," he replies. "I'm training for a month with my master. But if he wants me to go for another grade, then yeah. If it involves fighting, then fair enough – I've done enough of that in my time!"

The Stranglers will be touring the UK throughout March. Info: www.stranglers.net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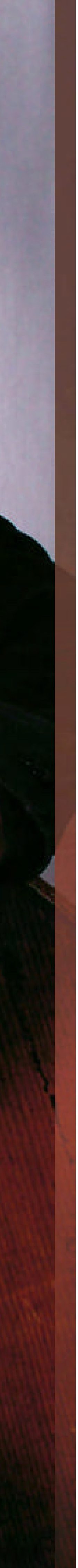

JOHNNY LOVES JAZZ

BASS EVERYMAN JOHN PATITUCCI IS A LAW UNTO HIMSELF WHEN IT COMES TO THE LOW END. ANDY HUGHES ASKS THE GREAT MAN THE BIG QUESTIONS

You could be forgiven for bracketing John Patitucci solely as a jazz bassist. After all, he's been on the road with Wayne Shorter, as well as featuring on albums by jazz greats such as Herbie Hancock, Chick Corea and Dizzy Gillespie. But Patitucci is nothing if not a versatile musician, and his vast range of bass techniques have led to his employment in the studio with pop-rock titans Bon Jovi, blues legend BB King, and even indie darlings Everything But The Girl.

Our conversation opens with a reminder about Patitucci's start in music, following the footsteps of his older brother. "My brother Tom started playing guitar: he was the first member of the family to take up an instrument. I had a try with the guitar when I was about eight or nine, but I couldn't really get along with it. I played with a pick and I'm left-handed, so holding the pick in my right hand felt really weird. There were no known left-handed guitarists around then, with the exception of Jimi Hendrix. I was a child, so I lost interest pretty quickly."

"My brother was pretty smart," he continues. "He wanted someone to play with, so he suggested that I could play the bass, because I could use my fingers to play. So we got this Sears Telstar bass for $10. It was actually hanging on someone's wall down the street in Brooklyn where we lived. It had a very short scale. I used Labella flatwound strings, and the bass buzzed a lot, but I thought it was really cool. I was listening to pop music on the radio: this was the early 1960s, so there was a lot of Motown and rock'n'roll. I was inspired by the people I was listening to, without realising it at the time. I loved the Beatles, and Cream. Paul McCartney was a real musician; he had a real dimension to his bass playing. A lot of British bassists made a massive contribution to the advanced techniques of bass playing."

"I started off picking up stuff by ear, and then I learned to read music, and was trained after that. I learned classical bass for three years, and then I left school. I never graduated. I was the type who did well without academic backing. I didn't need the motivation of a grade to make me want to learn as much as I could, and to explore everything I could find.

What is his current bass of choice? "My electric bass is the six-string Yamaha, the red one which you tend to see in pictures," he tells us. "I helped to design that bass, and I play it a lot. When we were designing the bass, we talked a lot about the wood we would use, we used the old Fender woods that everyone loves, with a maple top, and I also advised them on the preamp inside the bass as well. I have been with Yamaha for a long time, and I have been involved in the design discussions with them for quite a while. I would suggest a type of wood for a prototype and suggest that they put a bolt-on neck on the model to get back to the basic sound. With my favourite bass, one of the main artist relations guys from Yamaha came over to my house with a frequency analyser, and we sorted out the frequencies we wanted, and nailed them right there."

"I have been lucky," he adds, "because the basses that I have had input into with the design are prototypes, so I get the hand-built ones to play. I have to say that the production models are just as gorgeous, wonderful instruments. The wood is so important to the overall sound of the bass, as well as the look of it. The bass has to look good, so it's a pleasure to pick it up and play it every day."

John is known as an innovator and pioneer in the field of six-string bass playing, picking up the instrument almost 30 years ago. As he remembers: "I played a four-string bass

for years, but when I heard Anthony Jackson in 1985 and the pioneering work he did with the six-string, I really loved the way he played. Anthony persuaded a lot of manufacturers to start building six-string basses, but because I come from a jazz and bebop and acoustic bass background, I thought I could do something different. I envisaged the six-string as being used as a solo instrument in a jazz setting, like a horn. I welcomed the low B string as well because in the 1980s there were loads of synth players who were recreating bass notes lower than we could get on a bass. The low B gave us a change to reclaim that end of the scale, our rightful place. We're the bottom end of the band!"

Any nuggets of advice from the master about the best approach to bass? This is a subject on which John has some fascinating observations. "A lot of players, when they hear a specific style that they like, and want to play, they think it is important to learn the licks just from the recordings they hear. I would say that it is important to be able to pick up music by ear, especially as you can finish up working with musicians who don't write music, so there is nothing written down for you to go to and work with. But more important is the ability to assimilate the feeling behind these lines, and be able to apply it in other settings within the musical genre you have chosen.

"If you learn to read, you can access music from hundreds of years ago, well before there were recordings of music. Access to as much influence as possible is always a worthwhile thing. Even if you don't learn and play all the styles you hear, they can still impact on you as a musician. I would say, don't think small when you are looking to grow as a musician. The other thing to avoid is inverted musical snobbery. There are people who play rock'n'roll, and look down on any kind of music that contains any kind of intellectual component in it. That is a misconception, and it is wrong."

"When you listen to people like Monk, Miles, Coltrane, Charlie Parker and Marcus Miller, they have a lot of musical and musicianship knowledge, and it hasn't hurt their feeling and their playing. That snobbery works in the opposite way as well: there are people who don't know theory and technique, but may have a great ear and assimilate music that way. You have to be even-handed with how you look at these things. Technical growth will buy you freedom with your bass. If you learn to be natural with it, the bass will feel natural to you. You can learn to express yourself freely on it, and have so much more of a good experience. That will overcome the frustration you feel when you have ideas, but you lack the technical skill to make your hands play what you can hear, and what you can feel."

Because the jazz that Patitucci mainly plays these days is a music form based on subtlety and interaction, you would assume that jazz bassists are not big on effects. You'd be right – it all comes back to the basics. "I just use a little reverb on stage," he confirms. "For years I used one of those Yamaha Magicstomps, and when I was with Chick Corea years ago, I used a Bradshaw rack which had loads of compressors, delays, reverbs, you name it, and a big pedal board to control it all. I had loads of that stuff, and then I got really tired of it. I did what a lot of musicians do. I built up a load of stuff, and then got rid of it all, and then went back to basics, just plug in and play."

"I have a Radial Engineering Tonebone now, which is a beautiful little DI box with a channel switcher and an effects loop. Because of the weight restrictions on aircraft now, which are really bad, I have a Hall Of Fame Reverb by TC Electronic, a really compact, tiny thing that is great for my electric bass. I am an Aguilar endorsee now and they have some nice envelope filters, and some other good stuff. For live work though, I just use some reverb on my six-string bass, for soloing. For my acoustic bass, I don't use any effects; I like to get a very organic sound there."

Unless you're playing in your bedroom, you will have performed with at least one other musician, even if it's just a jam round at their house, and it's likely that your first interaction is going to involve a drummer. Any bass player's relationship with the drummer is a fundamental foundation of the band's sound. "It's not just a relationship, it's like a marriage," says Patitucci, laughing. "What I always tell my students is to begin by watching body language, and see how the drummer physically expresses the time. What do their hands look like? Watch their body movements, and get in sync with them, meet the drummer in the time.

"A lot of bass players make the mistake of thinking that they have to establish the time and make the rest of the band, especially the drummer, come to that point and joining them there. I think one of the reasons I have been able to play with so many great drummers is that I am willing to go to them. Drummers like it if you find their time spot quickly, and meet their beat, and mesh with them. I have always done that in whatever style I am working with, listen to the drummer, and find where they are putting the beats, and go straight there and meet them. That will get you a reputation as someone who listens, and is willing to be co-operative."

"A lot of bassists say, I don't like the way so-and-so places the beats, so I don't like working with him or her. That is so limiting, if you do that 10 times, then you've wiped out 10 guys you could be playing music with, and learning something from. It's really easy to get a reputation as someone who is awkward and restricted, and that will not do you any good anywhere as a musician. Learn to fit in, go with the flow, and enjoy yourself – that's the best advice any musician can have."

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It Was A Very Good *Year*

A COUPLE OF ISSUES AGO WE ASKED YOU TO NOMINATE YOUR FAVOURITE BASS-RELATED EVENTS OF 2014. YOU RESPONDED WITH A FLOOD OF ANSWERS

What's that noise outside the *BGM* command bunker? It's the sound of an exhausted postman collapsing to the ground under the weight of responses to our question a while back about the best bass-centric happening of the year. You responded in droves, from as far afield as Canada, the USA, Hong Kong and all over Europe. Some of your answers were funny; some of them were serious; many of them made us punch the air in glee – and they all demonstrated, one more time, what a great thing it is to be a bass player. We've collated a few of them below... what a year it's been!

Andy Leaman writes: "2014 for me so far has been absolutely amazing for bass – so much so I couldn't narrow it down to one single event. It started in April when I had the pleasure of seeing *BGM*'s very own Michael McKeegan on the Therapy? tour, then in May to see the one and only Prince with the added bonus of Ida Nielsen of 3rd Eye Girl. In the same month I fulfilled one of my bass dreams of being up close and personal with Stu Hamm at one of his clinics. The main event of the year was the Sonisphere festival. To see and hear the likes of bassist extraordinaire Billy Sheehan of the Winery Dogs, Frank Bello of Anthrax, Steve Harris of Iron Maiden, Tom Araya of Slayer, John Myung of Dream Theater and the awesome Rob Trujillo of Metallica was almost too much bass for anybody to take in."

A lot of you met your bass heroes this year, it seems. Derek Boon writes: "I met, chatted and had my picture taken with TM Stevens at the London Bass Guitar Show. What a lovely, modest man – a real pleasure to meet him. I also bumped into Bernie Goodfellow at the show, who I had not seen for a couple of years: we talked about my ideas for a Super Spitfire Bass. Bernie liked my ideas and agreed to build a bass for me. I received it in June and it's everything I hoped for and is a thing of real beauty. That day in March was special for me."

Maxwell Brown adds: "My favourite bass moment of 2014 was meeting Nathan East at a meet-and-greet in Berlin. As well as being a great player, his enthusiasm was infectious. He seemed like a genuinely good guy and I got a kick out of the whole event." More East appreciation comes from Paul Adams, who says: "Nathan East's Yamaha/TC Electronic clinic was a rare chance to see and talk to an absolute legend in an intimate setting. He also has the best bass player solo album for a while."

Emily Gibson tells us, "I got to meet and shake the hand of Geezer Butler at a Black Sabbath gig. What a legend." Peter Grey says, "Getting to meet Pete Wentz at Download. What a nice guy", and Christopher McGuinness reports, "It has to be the London Bass Guitar Show in 2014. I was lucky enough to meet one of my bass heroes, Lee Sklar. It was my first ever music show, and as if that wasn't enough, I bought my first nice bass – a Music Man Stingray."

Talking of first basses, nice or otherwise, a whole bunch of you stepped into bass-world for the very first time this year. "2014 was the year that I became a bass player," says Joshua Meyer. "I have played on and off my whole life and never took it seriously, but this year, I began devoting all of my free time to learning to play bass as a true musician, not just learning songs. It has been an awakening for me. So my favourite bass event for 2014 was when playing bass became part of my soul."

Aaron Muirhead explains, "I got my first bass in February and I haven't looked back since! I love every second I'm playing my bass and now I'm looking to study music at college, all because of my bass. The bass has changed my life forever and I can't wait to see where it gets me in the future." That's the attitude we like...

We gave ourselves a pat on the back after reading Oliver Edmonds' story. As he says: "Recently, I was playing a gig and I put my Fender down for five minutes to go off and have a drink. I returned to find it had been stolen. Of course I was absolutely distraught, but made an enquiry about it to the police. Two weeks later my bass was identified by my signature and phone number on the back and returned to me in one piece. Thank you guys so much for bringing up the use of UV pens to sign your bass in your *Ultimate Bass Guide*. This was my greatest bass event of 2014, and I can't thank you guys enough for it."

As all bass players know, music has the power to heal old wounds. After overcoming significant personal trauma this year, Luke Renton writes: "For the first time in my bass-playing career I can pick up my bass, just to play, create, enjoy and feel complete." Well done, that man.

As for *BGM*'s own best moments of the year? Well, we got up close and personal with Jack Bruce, John Taylor, Jeff Berlin, Lee Sklar, Roger Glover, Frank Bello, Steve Lawson, Mo Foster, Colin Edwin, Lorenzo Feliciati, Paul Turner, Freekbass, Duff McKagan, Malcolm Joseph, Igor Saavedra, Shane Embury, Fieldy, Steve DiGiorgio, Laurence Cottle, Michael League, Paul Summerlin, Nicky Wire, Les Claypool, Tina Weymouth, Jared Followill, Glenn Hughes, Mark King, Jon Thorne, Kip Winger, Guy Pratt, Jon Myung, Andy Irvine, Jonas Hellborg, Scott Shriner, Craig Adams, Jeff Walker, Nick O'Malley, Chris Squire, Tony Levin, Pete Agnew, Robert Trujillo, Stu Hamm, Pete Way, Alex Webster, Jeff Berlin, Carol Kaye, Dave Pegg, Danny Thompson, Robert DeLeo, Jah Wobble, Billy Sheehan, Paula Gardiner, Troy Sanders, Ida Nielsen, Nick Simper and Paz Lenchantin... and that's just the bigger features, without even going near most of the one-pagers or the Bassically Speaking archive. That represents a pretty fine year in bass if you ask us. Oh, and we also visited Cort, TC Electronic, the Warwick Bass Camp, the Frankfurt Musikmesse, the winter and summer NAMM Shows and the country's finest bass makers and dealers. And let's not forget *Bass Guitar Magazine Presents... The Ultimate Bass Guide*, the ace bookazine which distilled a ton of bass wisdom into a tasty one-stop tome. Don't thank us; it's what we do.

So who wins the Bill Nash PB-57 bass, which we promised to the coolest answer to our question about the best bass-related event of the year? Patience, grasshopper: entries are still flooding in. All will be revealed in our next issue. Until then, thank you for your support this year – we wouldn't be here without you...

More Readers Respond!

Rosie Eaglen "Realising that at the age of 66 I'm not too old to learn to play the bass."

Paul Lacey "After years of plinking away on a six-string, I bought a bass and sat down and learned to play it properly."

Norman Strong "Trying out the Ampeg Heritage BN15 for the first time, it totally blew me away."

Ant Wellman "The news that there was to be a long overdue Jaco Pastorius movie, lovingly crafted and bankrolled by Robert Trujillo."

Frankie Gibson "Discovered the wonder that is Jaco."

Patrick Lacey "Deciding to give up on guitar and concentrate on bass. My chops have come on 100%."

Mark Winter "My mate Dave gave me back a bass I sold to him 14 years ago. It feels like being reunited with an old friend."

Zachary Dunne "I bought my first bass, an Ibanez GIO Soundgear GSR 200."

Trev Campbell-Smith "Restarting playing following a 15-year hiatus."

Antonio Cagnazzo "*Bass Guitar Magazine*'s 100th issue! What else?"

The Scribes Speak!

BGM's writers nominate their best bass-centric moment of 2014

Joel McIver "Hanging with Bill Gould of Faith No More at Sonisphere. Fanboy? Moi?"

Stewart McKinsey "This year I discovered not just how many of my heroes I know, but how many have become great friends – and that is very humbling."

Duff Battye "My bass moment of 2014 was interviewing Roger Glover for *Bass Guitar Magazine*. A legend of bass playing, but so humble."

Phil Mann "Becoming part of the tutoring faculty at the Players School Of Music in Florida – very proud!"

Dave Clarke "Discussing the genius of Chic's Bernard Edwards during my interview with Duran Duran's John Taylor at the 2014 London Bass Guitar Show."

Mike Flynn "Playing the Love Supreme Jazz Festival with my funk-fusion band J-Sonics – the audience completely loved it, and so did many cynical music industry friends in the crowd, who in spite of themselves didn't have a bad thing to say about it!"

Gary 'Biscuit' Bennett "Becoming a columnist for *Bass Guitar Magazine*... no contest."

Mike Brooks "Acquiring my first Alembic bass and meeting a myriad of idols, enjoying their company and getting some great interviews in the process."

David Etheridge "Chatting on radio with jazz bass legend Ron Matthewson. A lovely guy with so much knowledge and so many reminiscences."

Stuart Clayton "Buying a 1972 Fender Jazz: an amazing instrument that I haven't put down since buying it!"

Paul Geary "Gigging in Tokyo and meeting Stanley Clarke, who had a show at the same venue the night before."

Ellen O'Reilly "Interviewing John Myung and talking about Rush like a pair of true prog fans!"

Joe Daly "Spending a day driving through the California desert with Acey Slade of Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, photographing abandoned buildings, talking bass gear, swapping war stories and dissecting all things music."

Ben Cooper "Getting the chance to interview Kip Winger for the magazine, and then meeting him in person at a gig in Bristol!"

Franc O'Shea "March 2014, in Brighton looking out on to landscaped gardens, Regency buildings and the sun glistening on the sea in the background, with Lee Sklar. There were just the two of us standing there, and he was silent for a moment before taking a deep breath of the fresh air and saying to me in wonder, 'Wow! This place is beautiful'. It was a quiet and special moment in his hectic schedule."

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MALCOLM BRUCE, SON OF THE LATE JACK, TALKS ABOUT LIFE AT THE BASS END

I really feel the concept of style is sometimes overrated. It is good to learn one's craft, styles, genres, history and so on, but bass players – and musicians of any instrument for that matter – who stand out are those that have become themselves on their instrument. The same applies to composers.

Having said that, I really just try to find what is appropriate to the form of the music in question. The right balance of elements: musicality, not overthinking, and certainly not overplaying – although I wouldn't call myself a player who sticks to the root notes. I am a composer and multi-instrumentalist, and approach any instrument merely as a tool for expressing the music. With the bass in particular, I am looking for how it sits in the spectrum of frequency, and how it works within a particular arrangement. Sometimes the bass is supporting by staying under the radar, so to speak, and other times it is a central driving force of a groove. It is all, as they say, 'down to the song'. Or, more specifically, down to the music in question.

I don't often play five-string because the tradition of the four-string bass has stood the test of time. It can be good to limit oneself as well. More than four strings can be fun, but it becomes something slightly different from bass playing. I grew up listening to Mark King. Slap is impressive, but it defines the sound too much in one direction for me to find it a useful technique texturally. Slap is sport. That said, the sound of slapping the strings can be effective as an extended technique, especially in more creative forms.

The secret of playing bass well is approaching it as a musician first and foremost, fitting into the music. Listening. Blistering chops are all well and good, but amazing technique should serve the music, not the other way around.

I play Warwick basses, which are amazing. I never have any problems with them, perfect intonation and consistency and great tone. I'm also a Framus guitar endorser: they're the sister company of Warwick. Thank you Hans Peter Wilfer!

Obviously my dad has been an inspiration, but again, he was not just a bass player, and he always approached playing from his own, very personal place. That itself has been an inspiration: how to balance having an intimate understanding of tradition with developing a personal voice. I love other players too, like Jaco, Pino, James Jamerson and so on. Charlie Mingus too, as a great player and also as a great composer.

Favourite bass tone? Wow, now you're really trying to pin me down! There are just so many fabulous records with fabulous-sounding bass parts. I would check out all the Stevie Wonder albums for a start, if you want to be moved that is. Nathan Watts. Start with the double album *Songs In The Key Of Life*. But tone is so personal – it's really just in the fingers.

The secret of great bass playing? Learn your craft. Learn the rules so that you can transcend them. Understand the infinite potential that you possess. Don't get too caught up in worshipping others. Take care of yourself. Nurture yourself. Believe in yourself. Love yourself. Oh yeah, learn your harmony and your scales too. And the ability to be spontaneous will help immensely.

What am I up to? I've been touring a lot recently, including a world tour opening up for Joe Satriani a couple of years ago, and lots of gigging with Eric Clapton's nephew, and the legendary producer Andy Johns' son, Will Johns. I'm going to be releasing a new CD later this year and will be out promoting and touring extensively after that. ■

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Roach Infestation

ELLEN O'REILLY MEETS PAPA ROACH BASSIST TOBIN ESPERANCE

It seems like a world away, here in the freezing cold winter, as I recall my time spent in the blistering heat at Reading Festival 2014. The weekend was filled with a host of excellent live rock bands, including Royal Blood, the 1975, Band Of Skulls and Queens Of The Stone Age, not to mention the Arctic Monkeys. It was a weekend of heat, exciting live music and great bass players.

Speaking of which, I had the chance to sit down in the shade and have a chat with Papa Roach's bassist and main songwriter Tobin Esperance, who tells us: "I think I got my first bass when I was eight years old. My dad was a bass player, he would always have one, and I would get it out and act like I was playing. It wasn't until I was about 11 years old when he started to show me bass-lines like Led Zeppelin's 'Good Times, Bad Times' and Beatles stuff, and from there I just went off."

I ask about the early influences that led to Tobin's playing style in Papa Roach. He explains: "I remember trying to learn Marvin Gaye, and that's how I discovered James Jamerson. I got really into funk with James Brown, and then funk-rock bands like the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Jane's Addiction. That's how I learned to play bass, just by playing along to records."

Throughout his career, Tobin has received no formal bass tuition – until four years ago. "I met with this guy who was just there shaking his head and he said, 'Just show me what you're doing, what you're capable of' and he basically just ripped on my technique," he chuckles. "But I was just too far gone. I've been doing things my way for so many years, that to try and start over from scratch and be disciplined enough to do things the 'right way' was just not on my list."

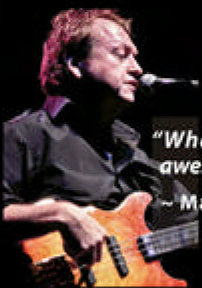
It's at this point when I wonder aloud why a successful bassist who was already in a huge band would want to get lessons... "I wanted to read music really bad, and I ended up looking at the notes and trying to just do it, but it was just not gonna happen! I was so accustomed to just hearing it and playing along that I didn't need it. I totally respect people who can read music, but I have an ear."

As I had just watched Papa Roach perform, I asked Tobin about his sound, in particular his awesome octave fuzz effects. "That's a Malekko Industries Bassmaster," he says. "I struggle with it when I'm playing in different countries where the power is a little different, because it gets noisy and unpredictable, but for the most part it's the hugest, gnarliest sound."

Tobin gives me a rundown of his live setup. "I've used Ampeg since day one, the 8x10 and the SVT sound, but for travelling in Europe I try to condense down to a really light rig, so I just have a Sansamp pedal and a power amp. I really think the tone comes from the bass and I play Laklands, which to me are one of the best, well-made basses out there. The overall tone you get from them is 'the sound' and that, combined with your fingers and how you attack the strings, is all you need."

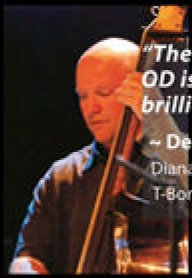
I ask Tobin to tell me about a few of his favourite players and styles, and he replies: "Of course Jamerson: when I hear anything funk or Motown, I just lose it. I love reggae too. I like a lot of different pick players like Joe Lally from Fugazi and Eric Avery from Jane's Addiction who are more melodic players, although that's a completely different style from what I normally do. I try and stretch out and play something different from what the guitar is doing. I've always been influenced by hip-hop music, especially the groove and simplicity in the bass-lines, but most recently I've been influenced by synth-pop and old 1980s music. I like to step on the overdrive and add a little octave that makes my bass sound like a synth at times too." ■

Papa Roach's new album *F.E.A.R.* is out in January. Info: www.paparoach.com.



"What a frickin' awesome pedal!"

~ Mark King
Level 42



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~ Dennis Crouch
Diana Krall,
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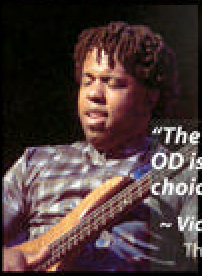

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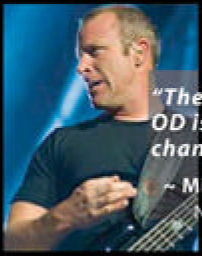
~ Victor Wooten
The Flecktones



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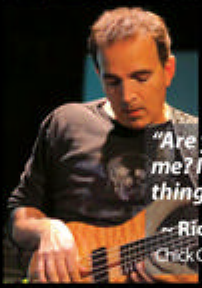
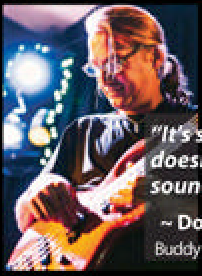


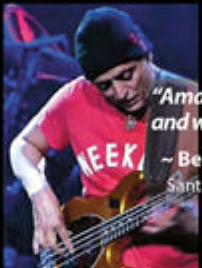
"Are you kidding me? I'm loving this thing!!!"

~ Ric Fierabracci
Chick Corea, Sir Tom Jones



"It's so clean and doesn't 'color' my sound."

~ Doug Johns
Buddy Miles, Chuck Rainey



"Amazingly useful and well-designed."

~ Benny Reitveld
Santana, Miles Davis

"The Bassbone® OD is a game changer."

~ Mike Kroeger
Nickelback

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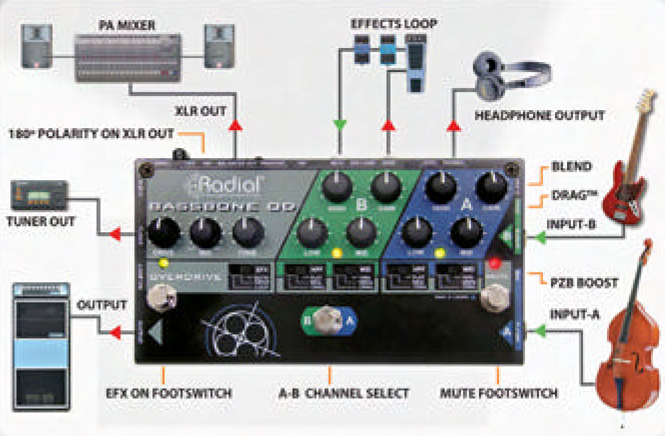

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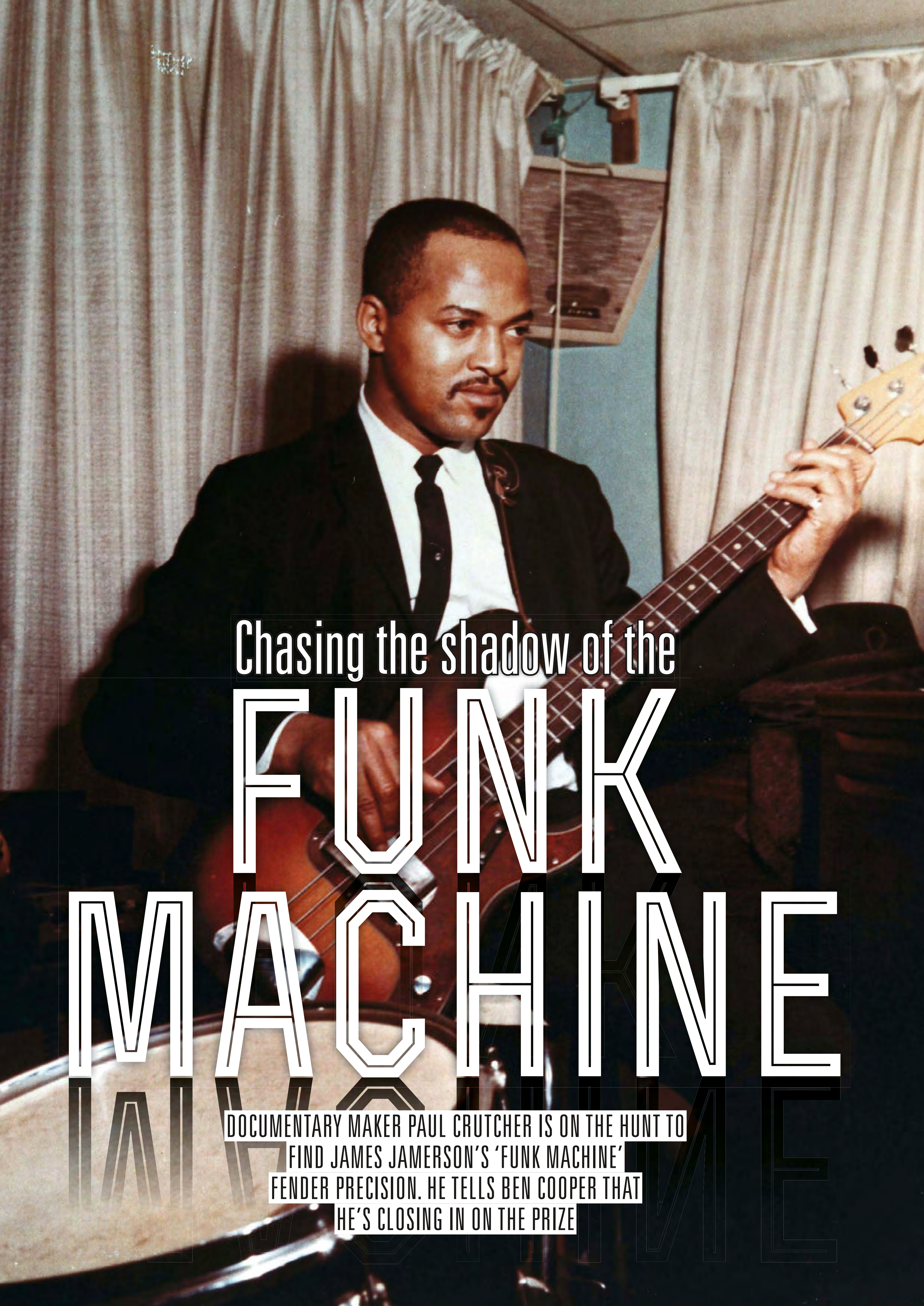
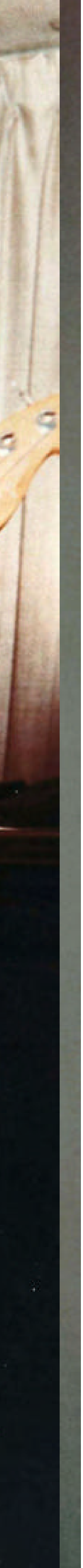


Chasing the shadow of the FUNK MACHINE

DOCUMENTARY MAKER PAUL CRUTCHER IS ON THE HUNT TO FIND JAMES JAMERSON'S 'FUNK MACHINE' FENDER PRECISION. HE TELLS BEN COOPER THAT HE'S CLOSING IN ON THE PRIZE



Despite legions of world class musicians reciting versions of the mantra 'the sound is in your hands', musical instruments – especially those used by revered players – can take on an iconic status among us mere mortals. The fetishisation of Jaco's 'Bass Of Doom', Eddie Van Halen's 'Frankenstrat' and others approaches near-religious fervour, hence the burgeoning market in replica instruments that mimic every scratch and ding.

If one instrument can make claim to be the holy grail for bassists, it's the late Motown star James Jamerson's Precision, the legendary Funk Machine. Paul Crutcher is on a quest to find this mythical instrument, which was stolen from James in the final days of his life. As he reveals, the trail is far from cold.

What prompted you to undertake a documentary about James Jamerson, and the Funk Machine in particular?
I've been interested in Motown and James Jamerson for many years. I loved Allan Slutsky's book *Standing In The Shadows of Motown*, but I found the accompanying documentary focused more on [the other session musicians] the Funk Brothers than just Jamerson. Those guys definitely needed to be recognised, but Tom, my co-producer, and I thought we needed to go deeper on Jamerson. He and drummer Benny Benjamin were really the heart of Motown. I spoke to someone recently and he said, "You know, we never grooved to the lyrics. It was that rhythm section that got everyone dancing."

Are Jamerson's family involved?
They are. I began speaking to his son James Jr., who still lives in Detroit, and I got his blessing to proceed. I've also spoken with James' cousin Anthony McKnight. He lives in South Carolina and is trying to get James into the South Carolina Musicians' Hall of Fame, which incredibly he isn't in. I spoke to Annie Jamerson too.

Even if you don't successfully locate the Funk Machine, what do you hope to achieve with the documentary?
We have a responsibility, while the people involved in Motown are still with us, to do our job as journalists, filmmakers and music lovers and record what happened. Most of these guys are 70-plus, so the clock is ticking. Even if we don't find it, at least we will ensure that future generations know who James Jamerson was, and how much he contributed to music.

Do you have any leads to go on?
I now have an eyewitness account from a reputable source about seeing the instrument at a vintage guitar show in 1993 in California. This gentleman worked for the Bass Center in Los Angeles, which was the first bass-only store in America. He had worked with the Fender custom shop to recreate an exact replica of the Funk Machine. At the show, a guy in his early 20s came by the table and said, 'Hey, wanna see something?' He opened up a plastic Fender case and inside was a 1962 or '63 Fender Precision with all the right markings. The young man said 'This is the Funk Machine'. I'm in contact with the people who put that show on, and I'm going through the booth and vendors list and trying to track down people who were at the show on that day. I'm talking to people and we're following up every lead we get.

What is it about Jamerson that still enthrals us?
James would play things that were familiar and quite common, and then he would suddenly do something that would lift everything to the stratosphere. A gentleman called Dan Garrett, who is writing a thesis on James Jamerson, wants to quantify what it is about James' playing that worked so well. Even when you speak to the big names, they have fairly vague answers like 'He played with soul', 'He played with feeling', 'He was in the pocket'... but Dan wants to work out exactly what it was that made him so unique.

When you've approached artists for their involvement, Gene Simmons of Kiss for instance, has the response been positive?
Overwhelmingly so – there is great respect for James. David T. Walker, who played guitar on 'Let's Get It On', told me a story about when he first met James at a Motown summer picnic. Everyone was there having fun: the Temptations, the Supremes, Marvin Gaye. In the distance stood this solitary figure casting a fishing pole into the water: it was James. He was away from the crowd. It's those moments of colour that I love and want to bring to the documentary.

What has been the process behind the search?
At first it began with word of mouth. I began by speaking to Phil Chen, who played bass with Rod Stewart. He knew James and knows a lot about him. Phil passed me onto Bonnie Raitt's bassist Hutch Hutchinson, so I spoke to Hutch and he then passed me to the bassist Don Wood, and through this kind of referral process I've picked up more information and more names. Singer-songwriter Kenny Koontz's name came up again and again. He knew James at the end of his life, and I've spoken to Kenny. At the time he didn't really know James' reputation. He lived around the corner from James and he loved him as a friend.

If you do locate the bass, do you think the owner will be aware of its provenance? How do you think they will react when you contact them?
I've been thinking about that, because of course that's the ultimate goal of the documentary, and it throws up a whole set of problems. I believe that the owner knows what they have, and that its provenance has been passed along as the bass has changed hands. As for their reaction, who can say? The bass deserves to be back with the family. If it ends up in the Rock And Roll Hall of Fame that's great, but the family are really the rightful owners so it should go back to them initially.

Why have you chosen the Kickstarter route?
We have potential investors, but we know there are a lot of James Jamerson fans around the world and we think offering partial ownership is a powerful thing. A lot of people have contacted me and told me how important Motown and James are to them, and they want to be involved and also have some investment in the project.

Why do you think such a myth has sprung up around the bass?
Well, the Precision bass changed the game as far as basses were concerned, even though when James first played a Precision he said, 'What does the P stand for? Pussy, that's what!' because he came from that upright bass background which is more physically demanding. Dan Garrett said to me, 'James could have played a mop handle with a piece of twine on it and made it sound good'. James had other basses and he used his upright bass too, but we think that the Funk Machine features on records that sold 200 million copies. The sound of that bass was so important because it was part of the soundtrack of a generation.

Why do you believe James Jamerson was so important?
I remember watching the film *Amadeus* and seeing that relationship between Salieri and Mozart, and how the character of Salieri hates Mozart's gift but realises later in life that it was almost like the Creator speaking through a person. I believe James had that gift.

His music speaks to me, it moves me, and I just find it amazing how he plays so much yet never treads on a vocal line or other instrument. To my mind he was the perfect bass player. I hate the way his life ended, how he went to LA but was so hurt by being turned down for sessions and his career and life ended so sadly. I almost feel like he's watching over the project – and that's why I want to do justice to him.

Only time will tell if Paul and his team can find the Funk Machine and remove the shadow of its theft from James Jamerson's legacy, but one thing is for sure, he'll be giving James and his enormous contribution to music and bass playing the justice it deserves. ■

Info: www.kickstarter.com/projects/1687370072/james-jamerson-and-the-legend-of-the-funk-machine.

Victor-y

VICTOR BRANDT OF VETERAN DEATH METALLERS ENTOMBED AD REVEALS THE SECRETS BEHIND THE BIG SOUNDS

I play like a rusty tractor: loud, detuned and heavily distorted bass with a rock and metal approach. I prefer to filter the schooled parts through a metal and punk attitude rather then going with something slick or too schooled, but I'll go with whatever I feel that the song needs. I often find that less is more with my bass playing. Although my ego might want to do something advanced or impressive, it might not get the effect that I am looking for. It's better to listen to the song and to your band-members than to your ego.

I own two five-string basses that I needed when I was in the band Satyricon from Norway, but I never felt that five-string bass was my thing. When I picked up my four-string again it always felt like coming home. I've accepted the fact that I'm in the rhythm section and I need to build a foundation for the song along with the drummer.

Slapping doesn't really go well with the kind of music Entombed plays, but I do enjoy playing slap or tapping bass when I'm practising. This reminds me of a funny story: I was part of Warwick's *Fuss On The Bus 3* DVD a few years back. I had prepared this slap/tap thing that I felt would be very impressive and fancy. Me and Dave Roe, who used to play with Johnny Cash, were sitting and watching the other players perform in front of the camera: guys like Larry Graham, Lee Sklar, Alphonso Johnson, TM Stevens and many more. Just before my turn to film my part, Dave said to me: 'Isn't it funny that there are so many slap and tap performances here?'

'Yes, you're right!' I replied, suddenly much clearer in my mind. 'What am I doing?' I thought to myself. I decided to completely change my prepared bass part for the DVD to something that I usually play instead. I borrowed a distortion pedal and I was set. Steve Bailey did the interview and asked me what I was going to play, so I said 'Death metal!' and played some distorted pick bass in the vein of Autopsy and Celtic Frost. I felt right at home. Thank you, Dave!

My first bass was a cheap Reno Jazz copy. I still have it, actually: I defretted it and use it for practising fretless. It was good to start out with a beginner's instrument, because it made me appreciate quality. It's never good to be spoiled or to take things for granted. My favourite bass ever to date is my Warwick Streamer Stage II. I get in a good mood just holding it or looking at it. I really like the thin finish and the Afzelia wood. I have five Warwick basses and four of them are Streamers. They feel like some of the best commodities in the world: you just can't go wrong with them.

If I could get the bass tone of any album ever released, I would choose *10,000 Days* with Tool. Justin Chancellor is really cool. But if I'm allowed to say so, I'm extremely happy with the bass tone on the new Entombed album *Back To The Front*, which came out in the summer on Century Media.

Info: www.facebook.com/EntombedAD

GEAR

BASSES Warwick Streamer Stage I and Stage II, Rotosound strings, Dunlop picks
EFFECTS Darkglass Microtubes B3K & B7K, Radial Bassbone OD, Radial JDX, Samson Concert 88 wireless, EBS Black Label pedals
AMPS Warwick Hellborg rig, Warwick LWA 1000

PROMENADE MUSIC

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4 String Basses

breedlove

11818 - Breedlove BJ350/SMe4 Electro Acoustic
10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag

Fender

13613 - Fender 1972 Precision Bass, Sunburst
13365 - Fender American Dlx Dimension IV Cayenne
4219 - Fender American Deluxe Jazz, Sunburst
9063 - Fender Am Special Jazz Bass, Sunburst
13650 - Fender Am. Vint. 64 Jazz, LP Blue
13502 - Fender FSR Aerodyne Jazz Candy Apple Red
13493 - Fender FSR Aerodyne Jazz Bass M. Grey
13307 - Fender Marcus Miller Jazz Bass, White
12288 - Fender Mike Dirnt Road Worn Precision SB
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
13628 - Fender Road Worn '50s P Bass, Used
13253 - Fender Road Worn 50's P Bass, Sunburst
12426 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass Brown Sunburst
13252 - Fender Starcaster J Bass, Black
13323 - Fender Sting Precision Bass, Sunburst
12895 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
12894 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
10997 - G&L Tribute SB2 4-String, Metallic Black

Gibson

9593 - Gibson Firebird Studio Reverse 70s Bass
12722 - Gibson Les Paul , Heritage Cherry Sunburst
10074 - Gretsch G6073 Electrotone Bass, Burgundy
11189 - Hofner HCT Shorty Bass, Black
12218 - Hofner HCT Violin Bass Guitar in Blue
13328 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Black
12188 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Sunburst

LEVIN

6780 - Levin LB400, Redburst

LODESTONE

8073 - Lodestone Primal Artist
8079 - Lodestone Primal Instinct P Bass, Green
8080 - Lodestone Primal Instinct Pbass Sunburst
8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
8082 - Lodestone Primal Pro 4, Tobacco Sunburst
4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, Black

MUSIC MAN

4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
8250 - Musicman Sterling 4 String Bass, Blue
8997 - Musicman Sterling SB14 Bass, Sunburst

Overwater

8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
10962 - Overwater Inspiration 4, Blue Burst
9867 - Overwater Inspiration Jazz PJ 4 String
13538 - Pro Martin Bass Guitar, Secondhand
13619 - SX VPB62 4 String Bass, Black, Used
12405 - Spector Bass Performer 4 String, Black
11197 - Spector Bass Performer 4, Red
13337 - Spector Coda Pro 4 Black Cherry Stain
4417 - Steinberger Spirit XT2 4 String Bass
13322 - Tanglewood Rebel Bass, Lefty, Used, Blk

WestCoast

6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red

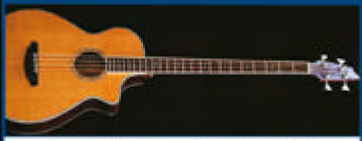
YAMAHA

10120 - Yamaha BB1024X 4 String, Caramel Brown
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
6963 - Yamaha BB424, Vintage White
5634 - Yamaha BB714BS Billy Sheehan, Lava Red
9000 - Yamaha RBX170
10314 - Yamaha RBX170EW Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black
13390 - Yamaha TRBX174 4 String Bass, Black
13137 - Yamaha TRBX304 Bass In Mist Green

5 String Basses

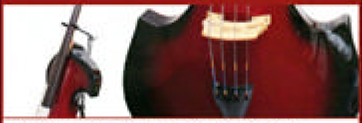
13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
10109 - Cort A5 5 String Bass, Open Pore Natural
13657 - Cort A5 Custom SP 5, Spalted Maple
13656 - Cort A5 Custom Z 5 String, Zebrawood
12538 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Open Pore Nat.
11014 - Fender Jazz Bass 5 String
13117 - Fender Deluxe Dimension Bass V Natural
11066 - G&L Tribute L2500 5 String Natural Gloss
9702 - G&L Tribute L2500 5-String In Walnut
8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
12198 - MusicMan Stingray 5 Honeyburst
13306 - MusicMan Stingray 5, Black
9002 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe Bass, Black
9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String Bass
10963 - Overwater Inspiration 5, Red Burst
12561 - Peavey Millenium BXP 5-String Bass
10960 - Pedulla Rapture Fretted 5-String Bass
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
11196 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Classic Blk Cherry
11195 - Spector Bass Performer 5 Black SP5BK
12406 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Amber
13214 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Black
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
9351 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass Guitar, Black
8275 - Yamaha BB425X,Sunburst, Used
8999 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
8023 - Yamaha TRB1005J 5 String, Caramel Brown
4889 - Yamaha TRB1005J Bass, Natural
10308 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass
13389 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass, Candy Apple Red
10310 - Yamaha TRBX505 Bass

Acoustic Basses



8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
12351 - Ortega D Walker White Short Scale
10498 - Ortega D Walker Acoustic Bass, Black
13472 - Tanglewood TW155A Acoustic Bass
13014 - Tanglewood TWRBE Travel Bass Guitar
12292 - Westfield PJB380 Acoustic Bass Natural

Electric Upright Basses



4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass

Fretless Basses

13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
13371 - Squier Vintage Modified Fretless Bass

String Deals

2 Sets of Elite (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Elite (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £35 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £40 inc P&P

Bass Combos

6762 - A arena BASS45 (45W, 1x12)
13577 - AER Amp III Bass Amp Combo
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)

Ashdown Engineering

4942 - AER Amp Two (240W, 1x12)
4389 - Ashdown 220 Touring 112 (220W, 1x12)
4388 - Ashdown 220 Touring 115 (220W, 1x15)
4385 - Ashdown 330 Touring 115H (300W, 1x15)
11192 - Ashdown ABM C115H Neo Evo 3 Combo
6459 - Ashdown ABM C210T-500 EVO 3 (2x10)
12259 - Ashdown ABM Mini 115 NEO Bass Cab
12258 - Ashdown ABM Mini 210 NEO 2x10 Cab
11193 - Ashdown ABM NEO C210 400W 2x10
8712 - Ashdown ABM414H 4 x 10 Bass Cabinet
8714 - Ashdown After Eight 20 Bass Combo
13135 - Ashdown DH15 C110 Drophead
13134 - Ashdown DH30 C115 Drophead Valve
8757 - Ashdown Electric Blue 12 220
8758 - Ashdown Electric Blue EB15 220
8751 - Ashdown Five Fifteen ABM100Combo
8753 - Ashdown Five Fifteen Mini Rig 100
5063 - Ashdown 5-Fifteen MiniRig (100W, 2x10)
8718 - Ashdown Mag C115 300 Evo III Combo
8720 - Ashdown Mag C210T 300 Bass Combo
8727 - Ashdown Mag C410T 600 Evo III
9320 - Ashdown MiBass C110-200
9321 - Ashdown MiBass C115 550 Combo
8750 - Ashdown Perfect Ten 40 Bass Combo
13202 - Ashdown RM-C115-420 420wCombo
9311 - Ashdown TE12 C115h Bass Combo
9310 - Ashdown TE12 C210h 12 Band
5224 - Ashdown Tourbus 10 (10W, 1x6.5)
5062 - Ashdown Tourbus 15 (15W, 1x8)
13122 - Ashdown Vintage Twelve 75 Combo
8988 - EA Euphonic Audio iAmp 350 Bass Head
12430 - Eden EC10 50 Watts Bass Amp Combo
12432 - Eden EC15 180W Bass Amp Combo
12431 - Eden EC210 2 x 10 Bass Amp Combo
13375 - Eden EC28 Bass Amp Combo
12429 - Eden EC8 20 Watt Bass Combo
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package

Fender

13497 - Fender Rumble 100 Bass Amp Combo
4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
12745 - Fender Rumble 200 Bass Combo
8284 - Fender Rumble 30 Bass Combo
4237 - Fender Rumble 350 (350W, 2x10)
4772 - Fender Rumble 75 Watt Bass Combo
10104 - Hartke A35 35W Bass Combo
9278 - Hartke A70 Solid State Bass Amp Combo
9471 - Hartke David Ellefson A70 Bass Combo
9008 - Hartke HMH112C Bass Combo
9281 - Hartke Hydrive HMH210C Bass Combo
9279 - Hartke Kickback 15 Bass Amp Combo

Mark bass

9004 - Markbass 121 Lite Alain Caron Combo
6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
6238 - Mark Bass CMD103H (400W, 3x10)
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin (1x15)
13279 - MarkBass Markacoustic AC601 Combo
5473 - Mark Bass Micromark (50W, 1x6)
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W,1x12)
5474 - Mark Bass Mini CMD151P (1x15W)
5471 - Mark Bass Minimark (250W, 2x6)
5475 - Mark Bass CMD121H (300W, 1x12)
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo

ORANGE

5234 - Orange Crush PiX 25BX (25W, 1x8)
5233 - Orange Crush PiX 50BXT (50W, 1x12)
10265 - Orange Crush Pix CR100BXT
13516 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Combo
10264 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Combo

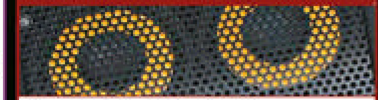
PEAVEY

8061 - Peavey MAX126 10 Watt Combo
11005 - Peavey Max 110 Bass Amp Combo
5965 - Peavey Max 112 (35W, 1x12)
5964 - Peavey Max 115 (50W, 1x15)
11004 - Peavey Max 158 Bass Amp Combo
13372 - RM-C210T-420 420w 2 x 10 Rootmaster
6320 - Roland CB100 (100W, 1x12)
4433 - Roland CB120XL Cube 120X(120w,1x12)
4435 - Roland Cube 20XL BASS (20W, 1x8)
4434 - Roland Cube 60XL (60W, 1x10)
5678 - Roland Microcube Bass RX, (5W, 4x4)

Bass Heads

13136 - Ashdown ABM400LITE Lightweight Head
13641 - Aguilar Tone Hammer 500 Bass Head
4387 - Ashdown 330, 330W
4398 - Ashdown 427 Small Block 427W
4384 - Ashdown 550, 550W
8706 - Ashdown ABM1000 Lite Evo III
8704 - Ashdown ABM2000 Lite Evo III
6760 - Ashdown ABM500 EVO III 575W
6250 - Ashdown ABM500RC Evo III 575W
6761 - Ashdown ABM900 EVO 3, 575+575W
4399 - Ashdown JJ500 JJ Burnel Sig 575W
5338 - Ashdown BTA400 400W
13131 - Ashdown CTM100 100W Valve Bass Head
11229 - Ashdown CTM15 15 Watt Bass Amp Head
8707 - Ashdown CTM300 Classic Tube Magnifier
13192 - Ashdown Five 15 BBH 220w Big Boy Head
5064 - Ashdown Little Bastard 30, 30W
8708 - Ashdown Little Bastard 550 Head
6455 - Ashdown MAG300H Evo III 300W
10938 - Ashdown MIBASS 2.0 640w Small Head
8713 - Ashdown Mag600 Head Evo III Bass Head
8710 - Asdown MiBass 220
13203 - Ashdown RM Mag 420 Bass Amp Head
9309 - Ashdown TE12 500H 12 Band Bass Head
13200 - Eden E300 Bass Amplifier
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
13414 - Eden WT800 Bass Amp Head
13198 - Eden WTX500 Bass Amp Head
0000 - Hartke - 3 Models in Stock Now
10408 - MarkBass Bass MultiAmp Stereo
5675 - Mark Bass Little Mark 250 (250w)
5245 - Mark Bass Little Mark 800, 800W
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
9035 - Markbass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
5244 - MarkBass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
5243 - Mark Bass SD1200, 1200W
7962 - Markbass TTE500 Randy Jackson Bass Head
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
9250 - Markbass Classic 300 Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
9249 - Markbass L Mark Rocker 500 Bass Amp Head
9255 - Markbass Momark Modular Bass Systems
9944 - Markbass MultiAmp
9725 - Markbass TTE800 Randy Jackson Bass Head
6261 - Orange AD200 MK3
8231 - Orange Dark Terror Valve Guitar Head
5242 - Orange TB1000 1000W Terror
5351 - Orange Terror Bass 500 TB500
5957 - Peavey Pro VB3 300W
5960 - Peavey Tour 450, 450W

Bass Cabinets



13640 - Aguilar SL112 Bass Cabinet
8733 - Ashdown 210T Deep Lite Bass Cab
6457 - Ashdown ABM115 Compact (1x15)
6456 - Ashdown ABM410H (4x10)
4376 - Ashdown ABM610 (6x10)
5677 - Ashdown ABM810 (8x10)
4394 - Ashdown CL115 Large (1x15)
4393 - Ashdown CL410H (4x10)
4392 - Ashdown CL414H Plus Horn (4x10)
4391 - Ashdown CL610 Tilt-Cab (6x10)
4390 - Ashdown CL810 (8x10)
6146 - Ashdown NEO115H Compact (1x15)
6452 - Ashdown MAG115 Deep (1x15)
6451 - Ashdown MAG210T Deep (2x10)
8754 - Ashdown MAG414T Deep Lite
8730 - Ashdown Mag 115 Deep Lite Bass Cab
8755 - Ashdown Mag410T Deep 4 x 10 Bass Cab
8756 - Ashdown Mag810T 8 x 10" Bass Cab
9315 - Ashdown Mi10 Bass Cab
9316 - Ashdown Mi12 Bass Cab
4379 - Ashdown VS115 200 (1x15)
8691 - Ashdown VS212 200 2 x 12 Bass Cab
8711 - Ashdown VS412 600 Bass Extension Cab
13377 - Eden D112XST Bass Cab
13376 - Eden D410XST Bass Cab
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
13197 - Eden EX112 Compact Bass Cab
13374 - Eden EX115 Bass Cab
13195 - Eden EX210 Bass Cab
13199 - Eden EX410 Bass Cabinet
13201 - Eden EX410SC Bass Cabinet
9007 - Hartke HCH112 Bass Cab
9292 - Hartke HCH410 Hydrive 410 Bass Cab
4766 - Mark Bass NY804 New York 804 (8 x 4)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x 12 Bass Cab
10412 - Markbass NY122 2 x 12 Bass Cab
10409 - Markbass NY151 1 x 15 Bass Cab
10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1 x 15" Randy Jackson
10411 - Markbass NY604 Bass Cab
0000 - Orange - 3 Models in Stock Now
6766 - Peavey 410TVX (4x10)

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

ALUSONIC
Hybrid Alberto Rigoni 5

BASSIST ALBERTO RIGONI HAS BAGGED A WOOD/ALUMINIUM SIGNATURE MODEL FROM ITALIAN LUTHIERS ALUSONIC. JOEL MCIVER PUTS THE PEDAL TO THE METAL

Alusonic
www.alusonic.com

Alberto Rigoni
www.albertorigoni.net

Alusonic offer a range of bass guitars, with the Hybrid series of particular interest to bass geeks like us because of the inclusion of a chunk of aluminium of the instruments in the form of a large top section. We're keen to see whether this adds much in the way of tonality, so when bassist Alberto Rigoni sent us his signature model for a review, we were keen to get it inside the *BGM* command bunker for a full test. Feeling metal today? Then read on.

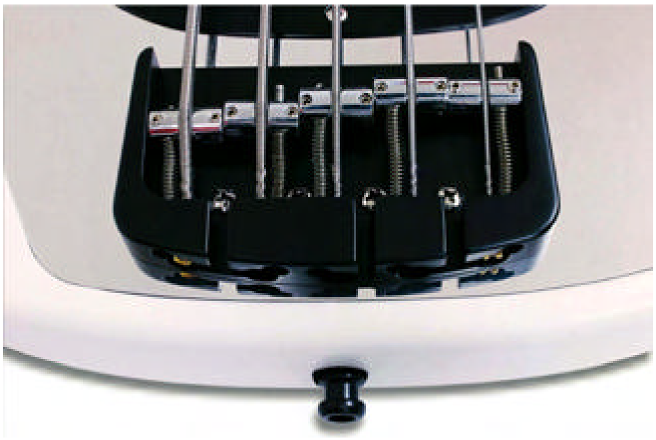
BUILD QUALITY

Alberto's signature axe is a beauty, all right, standing out from the crowd with its eye-catching combination of white, ebony and silver (OK, aluminium). The metal top is sunk perfectly into the body, the two angled Aguilar pickups are set firmly into the aluminium, the five-bolt neck join is solid and everything else seems to be in order, from the Hipshot machine heads – featuring one of those Marmite, love-or-hate Xtender detuners – to the amazing Alusonic bridge and controls. The neck is slick and playable without being slippery, and retains that essential solid feel. In fact, in terms of build quality, there's little to whine about and everything to like. Well, that part was easy, eh?

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

The first and most impressive point we noticed about the Alusonic on plugging in is its low B string, which resonated with great firmness and solidity. Tired of low Bs that flap around and give you aching fingers,

"THIS IS A VERY PLAYABLE BASS INDEED, ALTHOUGH IT DAMN WELL SHOULD BE FOR THE THICK END OF TWO GRAND"

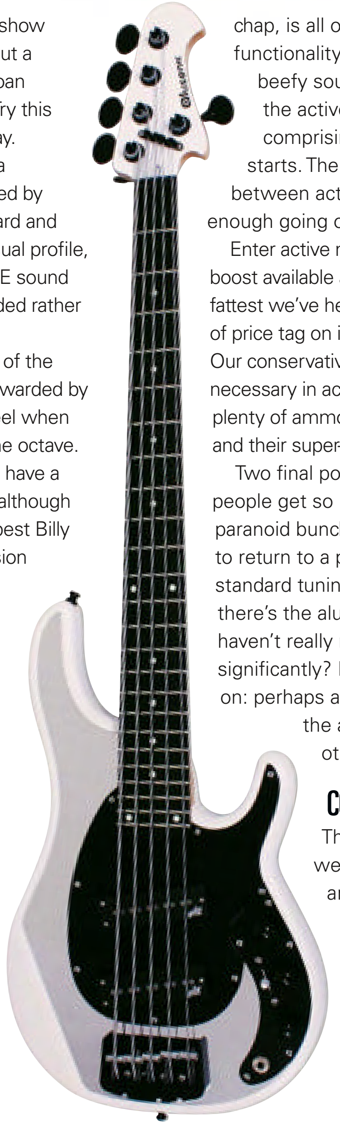


aguilar
aguilar

without much to show for your blisters but a tired subsonic groan from your amp? Try this bass without delay. The low B is like a railway line. Helped by the ebony fretboard and the flatter-than-usual profile, notes below low E sound legitimately rounded rather than chopped off.

At the top end of the scale, you'll be rewarded by a fluid, smooth feel when you solo above the octave. This bass doesn't have a shredder's neck, although you can do your best Billy Sheehan impression if you so desire: instead, it hits a sweet spot between lightweight/fast and heavy/slow. The Goldilocks Zone of bass, if you will (consult Google for that reference, non-astronomers).

Tones? Now you're in for a treat. Its owner Rigoni, a progressive metal sort of



chap, is all over YouTube demoing this instrument's many areas of functionality, and we confirmed for ourselves that an immense, beefy sound can be coaxed from it without needing to trouble the active controls overmuch. Head to the EQ, however – comprising three controls and a three-way switch – and the fun starts. The push-pull volume control is the place to go to toggle between active and passive modes, although quite frankly, there's enough going on with passive tones for most bass players.

Enter active mode at your peril, because there is a truly monstrous boost available at either end of the spectrum. The low end is among the fattest we've heard in a while, and certainly from a bass with this kind of price tag on it, while the same is true of the glass-shattering treble. Our conservative side wants to point out that this much power is rarely necessary in actual playing situations, but then again, it's good to have plenty of ammo in reserve, we suppose. Congrats once again to Aguilar and their super-hot pickups.

Two final points. The Hipshot detuner works perfectly well. Why do people get so hot under the collar about this little gizmo? Perhaps, paranoid bunch of musicians that bassists are, we don't trust it to return to a perfectly tuned position when you flip back to your standard tuning. Like a whammy bar, but less showy-off... and then there's the aluminium top, which you may have noticed that we haven't really mentioned in this review so far. Does it affect the tone significantly? It's hard to say, but there's definitely something going on: perhaps an extra zing when you pluck or pop a string. That said, the active treble boost does so much for the top end, every other tone-shaping factor seems pretty much irrelevant.

CONCLUSION

This is a very playable bass indeed, although it damn well should be for the thick end of two grand. There are a lot of sub-£2,000 bass guitars around at the moment, however, and Alusonic is hardly a major name to conjure with, so check the competition before you invest. However, if it's a wide (and accessible) range of tones you're after, plus a low B string that feels as steady as a rock, consider this bass as a serious option.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £1,740
MADE IN | Italy
BODY | Alder with epoxy lacquer finish, aircraft-grade aluminium top with mirror finish
NECK | Hard maple, satin urethane finish
NECK | Width 21 mm at 1st fret
SCALE | Length 34"
FINGERBOARD | Ebony
FRETS | 24 medium jumbo
NECK | Join bolt-on
PICKUPS | 2 x Aguilar Super Singles
CONTROLS | Volume (push/pull for active/passive), three-band EQ
BRIDGE | Alusonic brass bridge with quick release system
TUNERS | Hipshot Ultralite with Xtender
WEIGHT | 4.4kg

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Mighty B string feel. Huge tone capabilities
MINUS | Aluminium element doesn't appear to do much
OVERALL | A very decent bass for the price. Try it out

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

Darkglass Electronics
Your vision, our gear.
"My live sound is the best it's ever been with the B3K"
Alex Webster
Cannibal Corpse,
Conquering Dystopia &
Blotted Science
DARKGLASS.COM

RITTER CORA
Late Lounge 4

CHRISTMAS IS COMING. ASK SANTA NICELY AND PERHAPS HE MIGHT BRING YOU ONE OF THESE, SAYS MIKE BROOKS

Bass Gear
www.bassgear.co.uk

With each Ritter bass comes an element of surprise: what budget-busting features has German luthier Jens Ritter assembled this time? This particular credit card-melting beauty is a private order and coming in at around £6,500, you can be certain it will be imbued with Ritter's unique sense of extravagance and opulence.

BUILD QUALITY

The one-piece flamed maple body is just sumptuous, finished in what is described as 'Late Lounge' colouring (sunrise- or sunset-inspired, perhaps?) and making use of the thick gloss coat to show off the figuring to the maximum. It doesn't stop there, though: the matching finish has been applied to the headstock facing and neck. The three-piece laminated maple neck is securely attached using a five-bolt system that is super-firm, and the neck pocket is as tightly fitted as you could hope for. The bulbous top horn, deep cutaways, extensive contours and rounded chamfering highlight that comfort is a top priority with this design: the extended top horn improves the balance and a quick test shows it has the playability of a Stanley Clarke Alembic without the weight distribution problems for which that particular bass is notorious.

The black ebony fingerboard comes fitted with white pearl block markers and side markers, and the standard of fret finishing is impeccable, while the pointed headstock design with its limited dimensions improves the overall balance. The 19mm string spacing, 33.3" scale length, pleasantly rounded neck profile and overall dimensions invite the player to dig in. Don't be scared to do so: despite the price tag, this is a wonderfully solid bass that should be enjoyed. The gold hardware and dark wooden pickup covers just add to the visual extravaganza on offer, while the layout and spacing of the controls and pickups make this feel incredibly comfortable and effortless to play.

> "IF YOU CAN AFFORD A BASS LIKE THIS, A RELACQUER – SHOULD YOU EVER NEED ONE – WOULD BE MONEY WELL SPENT TO PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT"

Equipped with Ritter-designed circuitry and pickups, the 18 volt, three-band EQ has plenty of room to accommodate a broad

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £6,448
MADE IN | Germany
BODY | One-piece flame maple
NECK | Three-piece maple
FINGERBOARD | Ebony
PICKUPS | Master Ritter Slimbuckers x 2
ELECTRONICS | Active three-band EQ Ritter C3 circuit
CONTROLS | Volume, pickup pan, bass/treble stacked, mid
TUNERS | Ritter BT (custom made by Gotoh)
BRIDGE | Ritter 3D/B1 string attachment
NUT WIDTH | 39mm
NECK JOIN | Bolt-on, five-bolt
SCALE LENGTH | 33.3" (845 mm)
FRETS | 21
WEIGHT | 3.7kg (8.1lb)
LEFT HAND MODEL AVAILABLE? Yes
GIGBAG/CASE INCLUDED | Hardcase

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | The Cora has it all – great looks, fine craftsmanship, supreme playability and a tonal palette to match. Extremely comfortable to play, you will always want to pick it up and play it

MINUS | The price tag limits its potential audience, but you're buying quality, and quality costs

OVERALL | Bags of 'wow!' factor, tones to die for… what's not to like, assuming you're rich enough?

BGM RATING

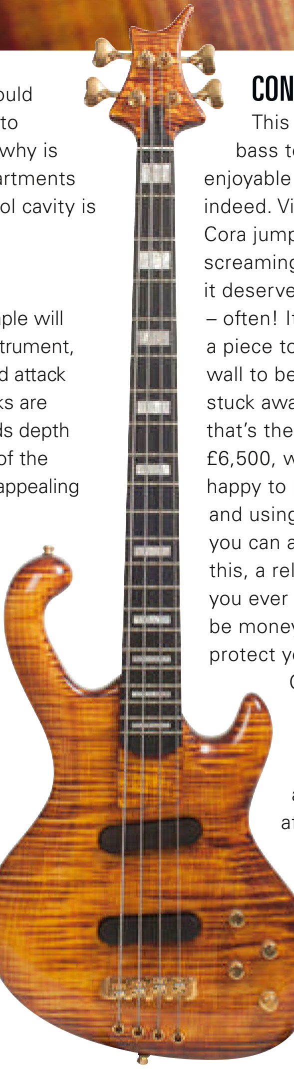
BUILD QUALITY ■■■■■■■■■■
SOUND QUALITY ■■■■■■■■■■
VALUE ■■■■■■■■■■

palette of sounds and at this sort of price, the player should expect plenty of variation. The jack socket is recessed into the rear of the body and, despite my initial thoughts of 'why is that there?', it doesn't get in the way. The battery compartments are of the fliptop variety for ease of use, while the control cavity is well shielded and tidily laid out.

PLAYABILITY AND SOUNDS

From the moment you first play this bass, it resonates. Maple will accentuate the bounce and resonant capabilities of the instrument, but it's really quite surprising to the degree that sustain and attack are prevalent. It's good to see that the Cora's stunning looks are matched by stunning playability. The ebony fingerboard adds depth to the natural tone and tempers the exuberant brightness of the maple body. The depth of tone and natural clarity are very appealing and acoustically, the bass exhibits a bell-like quality with a powerfully defined fundamental tone.

Plugging in shows what this bass is really capable of. The Cora is truly an all-rounder that invites confident playing. There's no lack of bottom end, but the EQ helps to tighten this up while the mid control adds some authority, giving the instrument a rich punch without being extreme or harsh. The treble EQ is also suitably well tuned, offering a crispness that slappers will like a lot. Panning across both pickups, there is no lack of tonal options while each string sounds strong and focused. Both pickups offer the individual tones I would expect to find, but the overall delivery remains refined, punchy and vibrant at all times. Rockers may think that the Cora sounds too clinical to appeal to them, but assuming you have the money and the visuals appeal to you, this bass wouldn't sound out of place in a rock band as it has the power and definition to do the job.



CONCLUSION

This really is a great bass to play: a very enjoyable experience indeed. Visually the Cora jumps out at you, screaming 'Play me!' and it deserves to be played – often! It's far too good a piece to be hung on a wall to be admired, or stuck away in its case. And that's the rub: at just under £6,500, would you be happy to risk taking it out and using it? Then again, if you can afford a bass like this, a relacquer – should you ever need one – would be money well spent to protect your investment. Considering how quickly Jens Ritter's instruments are purchased after their announcement, there is no lack of players willing to purchase them. Go on – treat yourself!

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BAREFACED
SUPER COMPACT 12 CABINET

KEV SANDERS TACKLES THE LATEST CAB FROM THE BAREFACED STABLE. WILL IT CUT THE MUSTARD?

Barefaced
www.barefaced.com

barefacedbass.com

Barefaced was started in 2008 by Alex Claber. You may remember Alex from his *BGM* column 'But this Goes To Eleven?': he's passionate about bass cabinet design, and with three generations of development since the start of the company, these Super Compact 12 cabs represent the real cutting edge of compact bass cab and speaker design.

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

Despite the traditional looks, the construction of the Compact 12 is based soundly on science and the latest acoustic design principles. All bass cabs are built to be rigid: they need to be, but most manufacturers try to achieve this by using thick and dense plywood to construct a simple six-sided box to put the speaker in. Some add an internal 'front to back' brace or two. This obviously works to a degree and it's an inexpensive way to build them, but it can have the unfortunate side effect of making the cab extremely heavy and resonant.

The Barefaced Super Compact 12, like all Barefaced cabs, uses relatively thin 9mm dual-density ply, but it's constructed around a complex internal structure of interlocking panels, which not only makes the whole thing incredibly rigid, but almost unbelievably light. The internal bracing panels support the external sides of the cab in such a way that there are no equal lengths of unsupported cab wall, minimising resonance. It's all clever stuff, and if you want to know more (much, much more) about the thinking behind the construction of these cabs, the Barefaced website has tons of additional information.

The single 12" driver is pretty special too. It's an Eminence unit, custom-made for Barefaced, but with an ingenious twist to the original design. The small centre dust cap is attached to the central tube that the voice coil is formed around, rather than glued to the speaker cone as usual. This little detail makes a big difference in that the dust cap itself can vibrate independently from the rest of the speaker, producing frequencies higher than the speaker cone could alone. An extra bonus is the improved midrange dispersion and a cooler-running voice coil, adding to the efficiency of the speaker. It's an idea that was used on early Lowther speakers and some ATC monitors, but as far as we know this is the first time it's been used for a dedicated bass driver.

"THEY SEEM PARTICULARLY WELL SUITED TO ROCK AND SOUL GIGS; THE KIND OF JOB WHERE YOU MIGHT WANT TO USE AN OLD-SCHOOL PRECISION OR JAZZ, AS THE NATURAL TONE SEEMS TO SUIT THIS KIND OF SOUND PERFECTLY. IMPRESSIVE"

So, a cabinet made in-house from best quality materials and a custom lightweight and efficient neodymium bass driver – this is shaping up well. How about the finish? The good news here is that it's smart, durable and looks great. It's a hard, sprayed-on, textured coating similar to that sometimes seen on pro PA speakers. The chrome corners are a nice retro touch and if you prefer even more of a vintage look, for a bit extra you can specify a silver grille cloth rather than the black steel version that comes as standard.

The Super Compact 12s are rated at eight ohms, and on the small back panel there are two dual-purpose Speakon/jack sockets, meaning you can link two cabs together for a more powerful rig.

SOUNDS

It was obvious that these cabs would need more than just a home test in the studio, so I took them off to work and used them on a good cross-section of gigs including a big stage set for a festival, a small concert theatre gig as part of a compact double bass rig and finally into the studio for a recording session. Before any of that though, they were given a thorough going-over to see how they sounded in a quiet environment.

Hooking them up to a Markbass Tube 800 gave a solid, muscular sound with an incredibly detailed midrange. Although the cabinet has no HF driver, you certainly don't miss the high frequencies at these lower volumes, and overall I'd describe the sound as focused and warm. There's a slight change as you stand further off-axis, but not much, and they should sound good to a wide area of the audience.

In the studio the Super Compact continued to impress, not least because the live room is up two flights of stairs and carrying it up was less effort than bringing up the tray of coffees before we started! In the acoustically neutral live room the cab sounded fantastic and the recorded sound was open, detailed and with the kind of weight to the low end that you'd normally expect from a 4x10.

Expecting a single cab to do all things brilliantly is unrealistic, and using the cab for a double bass gig revealed that the Super Compact 12 is better suited to reproducing electric bass in a rock or soul situation. The sound was good, and the lack of feedback very impressive, but the Compact 12 isn't designed to reproduce the mile-wide frequency range put out by the double bass, although the midrange was reproduced with stunning accuracy.

However, I've saved the best until last, because linking two of these cabs together for the festival gig was genuinely amazing. Remember, what we had here was two single 12" cabs with no HF units and a footprint little bigger than a small combo. Using the same 800 watt amp that we'd used for the initial tests, we plugged in my old '62 Jazz bass and the sound was astonishing, with a fat and focused bottom end that seems completely at odds to the size of the cabs. You want loud? Well here it is, with no discernable distortion unless dialled in from the amp. The cabs sounded like a rig twice the size, with a level of definition and presence that could only be down to the cabs' super-rigid design.

CONCLUSION

Don't be fooled by the traditional appearance of the Barefaced Compact 12. This is as advanced as bass cab design goes, and you'd be hard pressed to find another bass speaker that would match it for performance at any price. These cabinets work well in a wide range of applications, but to hear them at their best you'll need to crank up the volume and stand back. Any decent 1x12 cabinet will sound OK being driven by a high quality powerful amp at lower volumes, but where most start flagging, the Super Compact 12s are just getting into their stride. They seem particularly well suited to rock and soul gigs; the kind of job where you might want to use an old-school Precision or Jazz, as the natural tone seems to suit this kind of sound perfectly. Impressive.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £549
SPEAKER | 1x12" Custom Eminence with Neodymium magnet
CONNECTIONS | 2 x ¼ Jack/Neutrik (parallel)
POWER | 150-600W RMS
FREQUENCY RESPONSE | 37Hz to 4kHz
IMPEDANCE | 8 ohms
DIMENSIONS | (HxWxD) 560 x 440 x 300mm
WEIGHT | 11kg / 23.5lbs
EXTRAS Fitted cover and silver grille cloth available at extra cost

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Huge low-end punch, lightweight and a great price. Two of these cabs will make a portable rig that will handle most gigs
MINUS | Nothing
OVERALL | British-made and designed and quite possibly the best compact and lightweight bass cabs available today. If used with a decent amp, a single cab should be more than adequate for most small gigs or rehearsals

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

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TC ELECTRONIC BH800

IAN GLASPER GOES TOE-TO-TOE WITH TC'S FEISTY NEW AMP. WHO WINS?

TC Electronic
www.tcelectronic.com

Designed in Denmark, manufactured in Thailand, and weighing in at just three kilogrammes, this tiny bass head seems like any bassist's chiropractic fantasy. Despite its small mass, it's a sturdy lil' mofo, with a metal chassis and a brushed red, anodised aluminium front plate, that is not only almost indestructible but understated and classy at the same time. There are rack mount-style handles on the front – not that you'll ever need to grab hold of it with two hands, of course – and it is equipped with big, fat, über-chunky rubber feet more befitting Godzilla than Godzuki. Beware, though! Despite those impressive plates of meat, this head is so incredibly light, it's in danger of being vibrated off some unsuspecting cabs; for the trial sessions, I had to put a coat on top of the speaker to stop the head committing hara-kiri. Actually it's so solidly constructed, I wager it would bounce back up and just keep on rocking, but I didn't want to put that theory to the test...

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

It's rather handy to have a tuner built in, and it's extremely accurate too, once you develop the right sensitivity and get used to lighting the two green LEDs. The BH800's tuner has a frequency range for up to six strings, and it's always on, which makes for a pretty light display during your set, so you can keep an eye on those open string tunings as you play too. There's a mute switch for when you want to actually tune yourself up between songs without annoying everybody, too. Bizarrely, they only put five string indicators on the panel (there's plenty of room for six), so if you're tuning C, you'll need to light up D and G together.

The sounds direct from the amp are more than worth your dollar, but there are some downloadable effect options too, which open up hundreds of new avenues regarding tone. These are really useful if you're a jobbing musician swapping between bands of contrasting styles, and should save some room in your kit bag when it comes to pedals. While some might find the pre-loaded effects slightly naff, you can download all sorts of rather rad TonePrint effects endorsed by the likes of Duff McKagan, Nathan East and Victor Wooten. With the free-of-charge TonePrint app you can download them to your smartphone and straight into the amp, or via the USB port in the rear, which can also be used for upgrading the head's internal software, should the need arise.

There's a switch to toggle between the two effect channels, and there are two TonePrint dials, so you can choose how much or little of your chosen effect you dial in: these act as a wet/dry mix control for most modulation effects, but also control depth of chorus or speed of vibrato on others. The technology is pretty intuitive, and it all seems simple enough to use, and it's a rather saucy concept to be able to constantly customise your amp whenever the mood takes you. These effects can also be controlled by pedal, if you care to hook one up with the jack socket in the rear. There's also a headphones/speaker mute output,

which – when used in conjunction with the auxiliary input next to it, allows you to play along to songs you need to rehearse when the kids are in bed.

The Speakon cable connections caught me by surprise, and I had to rush out and buy one for this review, but it ensures a nice tight connection once screwed into place. You can drive more than one cabinet off the head too, as long as you get the loads right (four ohms minimum), and there's a balanced EQ output for DI-ing to PA or desk, complete with a handy pre/post EQ switch. As well as pre/post EQ, this switch determines whether your signal is lifted pre/post TonePrint effect as well.

One last feature that was obviously not put to the test during the review trial, but could save you a lot of money one day, is the automatic protection mode. If the amp overheats, or short circuits, the speaker output mutes automatically to minimise cabinet damage, but the balanced output still passes audio, so the show can go on. If only every amp I'd had over the years had been thus equipped...

SOUND QUALITY

The BH800 was run – rather ruthlessly, I should add – through both Hartke and Ampeg cabs. For such a dinky unit it's awesomely powerful, and really moves some serious air for such a small head; you stand in front of your cab when it's being assaulted by this little beast, and the sound is a physical presence slamming against the back of your knees. There's also an 'intelligent' EQ system, which the technical bods assure me doesn't just boost one frequency when you turn a knob, but several, actively contouring your sound.

Now, to this old philistine, that could be a great line in snake oil, but whatever the science behind it, the head sounds sweet and rounded, and the EQ is both smooth and subtle. I was able to tease both a deliciously deep and dirty dub tone and a sharp attacking percussive vibe with just a few minor adjustments, and the 'hi' and 'lo' mid options add extra versatility. With some time invested in its myriad intricacies, this little box will reward you for your trouble. There's a peak warning indicator by the gain control which lets you know when your signal starts clipping, so you can easily tweak the master volume and gain to get maximum db with minimum distortion... or vice versa, if you're a grind head.

CONCLUSION

Despite being small and light enough to hoist with just your little finger, the BH800 still manages to feel robust enough to throw at your drummer when he drops his umpteenth stick during the first song of your set – and it sounds great. You see, size really isn't everything, and big things often come in small packages. Feel free to add whatever other clichéd platitudes you like here – they're all true!

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £499
INPUT | ¼" jack
POWER | 800 watts
IMPEDANCE | 4 ohm minimum load
CONTROLS | Bass, Lo Mid, Hi Mid, Treble, Gain, Master Volume, 2 x Tone Print effect slots
DIMENSIONS | 11" x 9.5" x 2"
WEIGHT | 3kg

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Seriously, what's not to like with an amp this robust and this light, that sounds this good, for such a paltry price?
MINUS | Watch you don't vibrate it straight off the top of your cab and into next week
OVERALL | The downloadable TonePrints are a neat idea. This is some seriously powerful circuitry for your dollar

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

THOMAS AND GEORGE MARTIN
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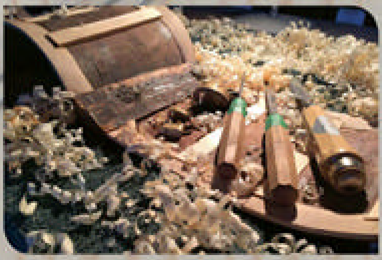

CREATION AUDIO LABS

HOLY FIRE BASS OVERDRIVE

CREATION AUDIO LABS HAVE A TRACK RECORD OF PRODUCING INNOVATIVE, STYLISH FOOT PEDALS. IS THE HOLY FIRE OVERDRIVE WHAT YOU NEED TO GIVE YOUR BASS SOME GOTHIC GRIND, ASKS KEV SANDERS

Bass Direct
www.bassdirect.co.uk

Having a decent overdrive pedal at your feet means that you don't have to faff around with your amp settings when you want to mix in some crunch. Although it's true that sometimes the last thing you need is a distorted bass sound, adding a little good quality overdrive is often the difference between a good bass sound and a great one.

Plugged in and switched on, the Holy Fire looks solid and well, a bit scary. The name is punched through the industrial looking stainless steel casing, allowing the reddish-orange lights inside to show through, giving the whole thing a fiery, demonic glow. Perhaps to counter this the gain, overdrive and distortion controls controls across the top are also labelled with punched-through letters, reading G, O, D. Set below these is a 'hi-cut' tone control which backs off the

treble frequencies when turned anticlockwise and adds them in as you turn it up. The solid on/off footswitch works silently and above it the status LED changes colour from red to yellow as the signal starts to overdrive.

The signal processing inside the Holy Fire reshapes the distortion waveform using algorithms modelled on early computer technology. In practice, this means a distinctive overdrive sound that doesn't affect or colour the bass's natural tone at all. In other words, none of the low frequencies of your bass are lost even at the most extreme settings: this is quite unusual in a foot pedal and very welcome. The overdrive and distortion controls interact with each other: using both, there's a massive range of effects available from the most subtle Motown valve sound right through to a 1970s sci-fi analogue style fuzz, complete with satanic sustain and slowly decomposing signal.

Being last in the signal chain, the gain works whether or not the footswitch is on, and in this respect it's better to think of it as a master volume. It doesn't actually affect the amount of overdrive or distortion, just the overall output level, so it's best to start with the gain set halfway (which seemed to correspond to the volume of the bass plugged directly into the amp) and then set your distortion and overdrive, before adjusting the output level with the gain control. This way, when you stomp on the footswitch you'll have the right volume level.

Backing off the overdrive and working with just the distortion control to start with, the sound is surprisingly subtle. If you like your bass overdrive tasteful and natural, you'll find what you're looking for here. With the gain set halfway, little happens until the distortion control gets to about 10 o'clock, when a warm, natural crunch slowly develops along with a smooth increase in volume. With just the overdrive, the effect is much more striking and by the time you've turned it fully up, you're listening to the sort of overdrive your dad used to boast about, like a 1960s Marshall stack or a Sunn Coliseum rig with the taps up full. This was the opposite of what I had expected, as normally the distortion would be far more aggressive than the overdrive. But both are distinctive and musical: using both controls together, and carefully adjusting each, you'll find exactly the sound and effect you're after.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE £195
FEATURES Gain, overdrive, distortion, hi-cut
POWER 48VDC to 260VAC power supply included

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Solid build, no unwanted noise and perfect for your next Halloween gig
MINUS | Can't be run on batteries; powered by a hefty 48V PSU which means you can't daisy-chain it from other effects in your pedalboard
OVERALL | Another top quality pedal from Creation Audio Labs. Well made and definitely worth an audition

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY	10/10
SOUND QUALITY	10/10
VALUE	8/10

As I said earlier, the Holy Fire has been carefully engineered so that none of your bass's natural frequency range is lost, which means that even at extreme settings an old Precision will still sound like an old Precision, and the tone from your active Ken Smith will retain all of its quality. If you're in the market for an overdrive, it's worth considering that both the build and the sound of the Holy Fire are outstanding and place this pedal well above the average for a bass overdrive.

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LOVETONE
Ring Stinger

IN HIS LAST COLUMN, CHRIS HAILS THE LOVETONE RING STINGER

In my final Essential Rig, I'm going to take the opportunity to write about a pedal that I've always wanted to try. My reasons are not for its usefulness, or its ability to sculpt my tone into a perfect bass sound, but because it's absolutely mad. Ridiculous in fact: something that, if switched on during a regular set, would surely lose me the gig. The ability to approach your instrument and the music you make in a totally different and experimental way must be a good thing, right? So, here we go, a box of frogs in pedal form – the Lovetone Ring Stinger.

HISTORY

Lovetone, the brainchild of Dan Coggins and Vlad Naslas, began production in 1994. Based in Henley in Berkshire, its slant on boutique pedals was to offer all-analogue effects with a wide array of control options. Its initial models included the Big Cheese Fuzz, Brown Source Overdrive, Doppelganger Phaser/Vibrato and the Meatball Envelope Filter. Production was sporadic, but those bassists who managed to get their hands on a Lovetone product quickly spread the word. The Ring Stinger was introduced in 1998 alongside the Wobulator Panning Tremolo. The company stopped production of all units in 2001, and as a result second-hand Lovetone effects rocketed in price. Lovetone continued to offer support for their existing products until Coggins left the company in 2008. Naslas is still in charge of the company and their website is still live.

IN USE

As you might expect, the RS is not a simple pedal to explain, but I'll do my best. The octave/ring footswitch selects one of two modes, germanium octave-up fuzz or ring modulator. The ring modulator can be switched between four different voltage controlled oscillator (VCO) settings: sine, triangle, sawtooth and square wave.

On the left hand side is a footswitch to enable a low frequency oscillator (LFO). This in turn has four settings: either square/triangle wave pulse width modulation, or square/triangle wave VCO modulation. The knobs from left to right are depth and rate for the LFO; a frequency control for the VCO; drive, which functions like a distortion pedal's drive knob; timbre, a tone control; and a wet/dry blend control. Phew!

Across the top are your usual in, out and 9VDC jacks, as well as two expression pedal outputs to control LFO depth and VCO frequency: the ring stinger came with a light-sensitive jack adapter that could be used for theremin-style control over VCO frequency. Finally, the footswitch in the centre transports you to Narnia on the back of a unicorn – not really, it's just the on/off switch.

Without a PHD in sound design, fully understanding these controls is not easy. What's more, when you turn it on, the assault on the senses is quite extraordinary. It's by far the most extreme pedal I've ever experienced. To give you an idea of what's on offer, here's a verbatim quote from the manual: "Klangs, bells, metallic FX, pseudo vocoder FX, Dalek noises, sci-fi atmospherics, spooky warbling, trem arpeggios, tonal toggling, touch sensitive keying, pitch cross-firing, microtonal and atonal FX, evolving drones, didgeridoo FX and not least the meanest graunchiest octave fuzz ever – and these are just for starters!"

AVAILABILITY

Ring Stingers are now rare and highly sought after; prices therefore reflect this. Expect to pay in excess of £750 for a working used example, more if it's immaculate and boxed. They do crop up on eBay and bass forums now and then. Good luck!

ALTERNATIVES

There is truly nothing on a par with the insanity of the RS, but several companies offer simple ring modulators. Check out the EHX Ring Thing (£145), Pigtronix Mothership (£340) or MOOG MF-102 (£220).

CONCLUSION

As with other Lovetone effects I've used, the sheer amount of variables makes not only finding sounds, but also recalling them very long-winded. Then again, where's the fun in simply plugging in and immediately finding the sound you're after? The RS is all about experimentation and finding new sonic textures, even if it means many hours of tweaking. Lovetone remains somewhat of an enigma, which I'm sure will continue to drive prices ever higher. Despite this, its designs will endure as some of the most innovative and creative effects pedals ever made.

Chris has amassed a staggering amount of insightful, interesting and sometimes irrelevant information on bass guitar equipment during his career as a professional bassist. So we continue to push electronics and bass amps under his nose and make him report to us on his favourites.

CHRIS HANBY @CHanbyEFX

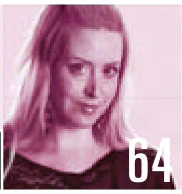
BASS TECHNIQUES

MAKING YOU A BETTER BASS PLAYER

Welcome to our redesigned techniques section, in which *Bass Guitar Magazine* collates the wit and wisdom of the *crème de la crème* of the electric and upright bass world. We're fortunate enough to have some serious talent on the team, from world-class music educators to experienced touring musicians, who between them have laid down the low notes in every studio, club and arena in the civilised world. Note that we've divided the columns according to **Beginner**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced** level for easy reference. Whether you're looking to improve your playing technique, expand your awareness of theory, set up your rig to sound like your particular bass hero or simply get on a bus and tour, we provide the answers you need here. What are you waiting for? Dive in...

Joel McIver, editor

Ellen O'Reilly is a freelance bassist and vocalist currently studying at ICMP. Ellen has extensive experience in gigging, studio and television work.
www.lowendlady.com



ELLEN O'REILLY BEGINNER'S THEORY 64

Paul Geary attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Musicians' Institute of Technology. He also heads up the Academy Of Contemporary Music's bass school.
www.paulgeary.com

PAUL GEARY BEGINNER'S TECHNIQUES 65

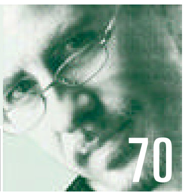
Rob Statham has amassed over 25 years as a professional freelance bass player. He has played in a wide range of musical settings, including jazz, blues, prog and classical, and he has taught for the past three years at Tech Music School.

ROB STATHAM INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES 66

Alex Webster founded the frankly terrifying Cannibal Corpse in 1988 and has guested since then on musically complex projects such as Blotted Science. He is the author of the Extreme Metal Bass instruction book.

ALEX WEBSTER INTERMEDIATE THEORY 68

Head of the Bass Department at BIMM Brighton, Franc has worked with artists such as Steve Howe (Yes), Lisa Moorish, and Mike Lindup (Level 42). Franc uses Jeff Chapman basses and Elites strings.
www.francoshea.com



FRANC O'SHEA ADVANCED THEORY 70

Say hello to advanced techniques columnist Philip Mann, star of studio and stage. Ready to get those fingers flying? Mann up...

PHILIP MANN ADVANCED TECHNIQUES 74

David Etheridge studied double bass at the Royal College of Music. Since then he's worked with musicians such as Nigel Kennedy and Martin Taylor. David teaches double and electric bass and is the MD of two big bands and a 55-piece jazz orchestra.

DAVID ETHERIDGE UPRIGHT BASS 76

Mike has written for *BGM* since 2004 and has been a bassist since 1987, clocking up over 3000 gigs around the world in the process. He has played for and worked with the likes of Bonnie Tyler and Toyah Willcox, and has a bass collection to rival a small shop.

MIKE BROOKS COVER BAND PRO 78

Steve Lawson is the UK's most celebrated solo bass guitarist, with 15 years of touring and 36 solo and collaborative albums to his name. He also lectures at colleges around the world.
www.stevelawson.net.

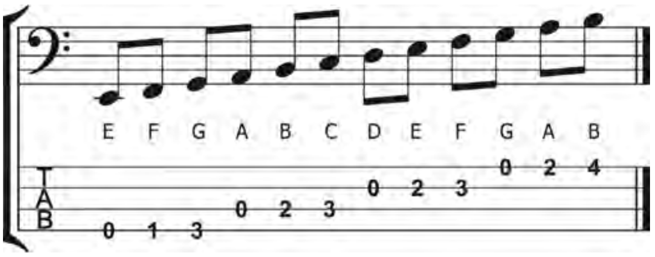
STEVE LAWSON EFFECTS MAESTRO 80

BGM Notation Legend

THE FOLLOWING IS A GUIDE TO THE NOTATION SYMBOLS AND TERMINOLOGY USED IN BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE

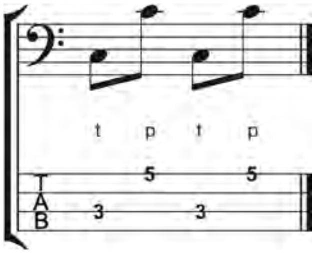
The Stave: most music written for the bass guitar uses the bass clef. The example to the right shows the placement of the notes on the stave.

Tablature: this is a graphical representation of the music. Each horizontal line corresponds with a string on the bass guitar, with the lowest line representing the lowest pitched string (E). The numbers represent the frets to be played. Numbers stacked vertically indicate notes that are played together. Where basses with five or six strings are required, the tablature stave will have five or six lines as necessary.



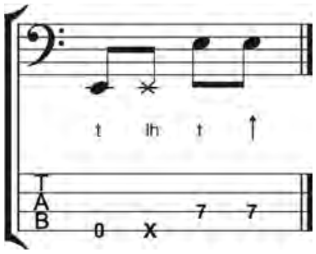
Notes shown in brackets indicate that a note has been tied over from a previous bar.

PLAYING TECHNIQUES



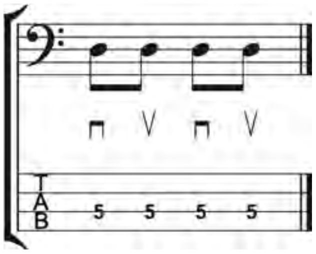
SLAP AND POP TECHNIQUE

Notes slapped with the thumb are marked with a 't', notes popped with the fingers marked with a 'p'



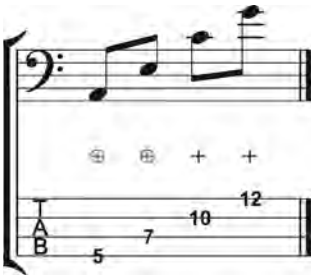
ADVANCED SLAP TECHNIQUE

Fretting hand slaps are marked 'lh' and double thumbing upstrokes are shown with an upward pointing arrow



PLECTRUM TECHNIQUE

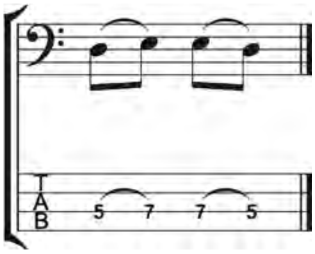
Where necessary, down and upstrokes with the pick will be shown using these symbols (down-up-down-up)



TAPPING TECHNIQUES

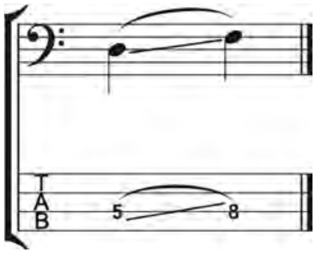
Fretting hand taps are shown with a '+' in a circle. Picking hand taps are shown with '+'. Specific fingers will be shown with numbers if necessary

FRETTING TECHNIQUES



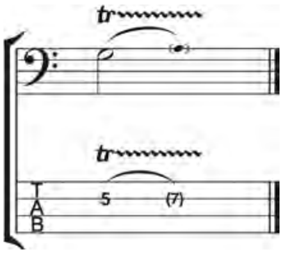
HAMMER-ON AND PULL-OFF

Hammer-ons and pull-offs are shown with a slur over the notes. Only the first note is plucked by the picking hand



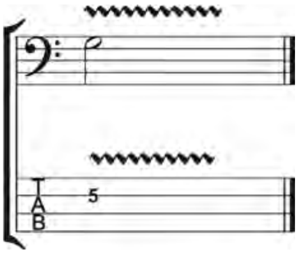
SLIDE (GLISSANDO)

Slides are performed by playing the first note then sliding the fretting finger up to the second note



TRILLS

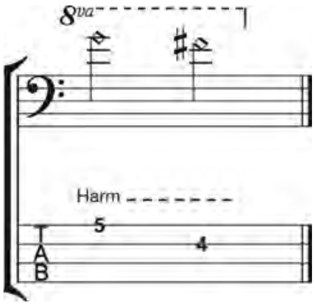
Trills are performed by rapidly alternating between the two notes shown using hammer-ons and pull-offs



VIBRATO

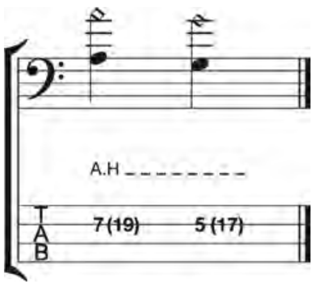
The pitch of the note is altered by repeatedly bending the string up and back with the fretting finger

PLAYING HARMONICS



NATURAL HARMONICS

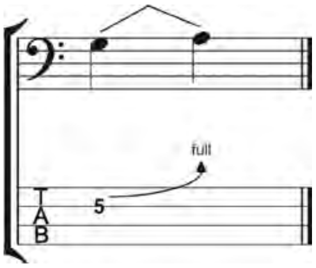
The note is played as a harmonic by lightly touching the string above the fret indicated



ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS

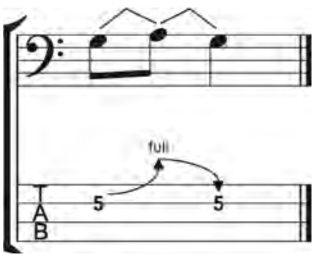
Pluck the string while fretting the lower note and placing the edge of the picking hand thumb an octave higher (the note shown in brackets)

BENDING NOTES



BEND

The note is bent upwards to the interval specified: ½ = semitone, full = tone



BEND AND RELEASE

The note is bent up to the interval indicated then released back to its original pitch

THE FRONT LINE

WANT TO MAKE IT AS A PROFESSIONAL BASSIST? LISTEN UP AS BGM'S PROFESSIONAL BASS TEAM REPORTS BACK FROM THE LIVE STAGE

THE JAZZ BASSIST

RUTH GOLLER

Jazz ninja Ruth gets literary on us

I recently tidied up my shelves and came across several books about playing the bass that I have accumulated over the years. When I was just starting to get serious about playing, I thought that everything I needed to be a good musician was written in these books, and that all I needed to do was to go through them, one by one. After about 12 years of playing professionally I know that just a few of those books would have been enough for me: I've never even opened some of them. Studying music and taking bass lessons at university meant that I got a lot of information from teachers: certain theory books simply go through the same stuff in a slightly different language. There are a few books, however, that I hold dear and which will always be a part of my life in one way or another. One of these is *Modern Walking Bass Technique: Volume 1* by Mike Richmond. Anyone interested in learning how to play harmonically sound walking lines should have this book. The lines cover a 16-bar blues chord progression in different keys: the further you go on, the more complex the chords within that progression become. It's especially interesting for double bassists, as it explains good posture and right/left hand technique, and it's also great for practising your reading. Another fantastic book is the *Charlie Parker Omnibook* for all bass clef instruments. It has dozens of transcriptions of Parker's solos and has helped me a lot with improvising, phrasing and reading. Studying solos by horn players can be a real eye-opener. Another book that never leaves my side is *Six Suites For Solo Cello* by JS Bach. Of course the pieces are for cello, but they are written in bass clef, so it works fine for electric or double bass.

soundcloud.com/ruth-goller

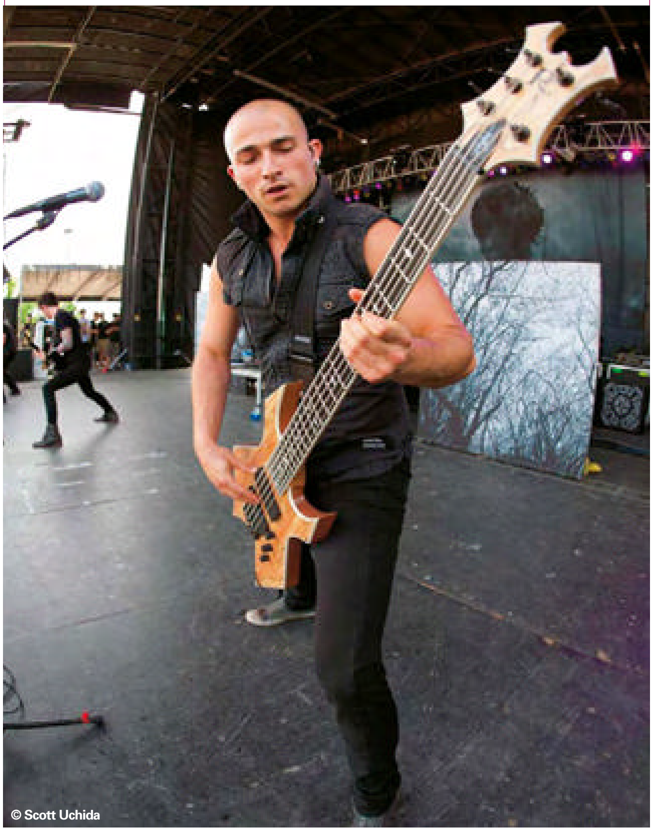
THE METALHEAD

PAOLO GREGOLETTO

Paolo Gregoletto looks back at a fork in the road

I've been thinking back to the fall of 2008 and our 'Unholy Alliance' tour with Slayer. Our fourth album, *Shogun*, had just been released, and it was a rebound moment for us. The previous album *The Crusade* and its touring cycle had been met with mixed reviews and mixed feelings. There is no use in wondering what could or should have been. We were bound to take a downturn eventually, so getting it out of the way may have been better for us in the long run. This Slayer tour also featured Mastodon and Amon Amarth. We were co-headlining in the UK, which still blows my mind, and the main support in Europe. I was in an entirely different place to where I'd been four years prior to *Shogun*. I ran into friends during our brief downtime: they knew that we were doing well in Europe, which definitely made me feel proud. The biggest lessons I learned at this point were that nothing is guaranteed and that what you put into a band is what you get out it. I also used this time to turn around the way I was living on tour in order to become healthier and more focused. Looking back now, I realise how important that tour and album was for us. I view it as a rite of passage: we were holding our own on a tour with a legendary band and stabilising our situation at a very uncertain time for us. On another note, time does seem to change perspectives on music. *The Crusade* turned eight years old as of this column being written, and it's interesting to see how it is perceived now as to when it was the follow-up to an immensely popular debut record. I guess even my own opinions on the record have changed quite a bit on it. Dealing with negativity was such a new experience for us, and I don't think any of us were really ready for it on that level. With time, certain songs started to shine through a bit more and have since become fan favourites in the set: the music is starting to become free from the original stigma that it had in 2006. If I could change one thing about that record, it would be the preparation and demoing. We didn't have time to think everything through: it was a grand vision without a grand execution. We took that lesson with us into subsequent albums.

www.trivium.org



© Scott Uchida

THE ALTERNATIVE ROCKER

MICHAEL MCKEEGAN

Therapy? bassist Mike considers the mixed blessing of 'time off'

Any working musician who hears the phrase 'quiet year' tends to view it with a mixture of relief and dread. Relief because it's time to regroup and take stock, and dread because it's going to be a bit less of what you love doing. This past year was supposed to be one of those quiet ones for us, but thankfully it's been one of the best, most productive and creative years in recent history. The main treat was writing, rehearsing and recording a new album – our first since 2012 and a record that we felt had to be something really special. It was a real buzz to be back in the studio being creative and working hard at retaining the strengths of the band's sound, while trying to put a fresh perspective on it where necessary. Hopefully we've achieved that. Other highlights included having our *Troublegum* and *Infernal Love* albums finally reissued in rather lovely expanded deluxe editions; a run of killer live shows, including a celebratory TG20 UK tour; our debut festival performances at Hellfest in France; and a one-off *Infernal Love* show at Sonisphere UK. At the time of writing we're just about to receive the Legends Award at the Northern Irish Music Awards: it's a massive honour for us to be recognised in this way in our homeland. There was also the small matter of signing a brand new deal, which will usher in the aforementioned album – number 14! – early next year. Eleven brand new songs to unleash and add into the set, something that every musician can't help but be excited about. Anyway, hopefully this doesn't come across as a huge brag-fest: I'm hoping to illustrate that a musician's work is always ongoing, whether they're 'quiet' or 'busy'. Because we get to do what we love, our passion is our day job: it's all about chiselling away, refining the art and progressing. If 2014 was a quiet year, then roll on next year's busy and hopefully noisy year. It goes without saying that I hope you've all had a good year yourselves, and I wish you all the best for a safe, fun and productive 2015.

www.therapyquestionmark.co.uk

THE EXTENDED-RANGE SPECIALIST

STEWART MCKINSEY

Ten-string tweaker Stew continues his bass survey...

Where Roberto Vally is a professional session musician and sideman, Steuart Liebig is best known for his role in Los Angeles' experimental and improvised underground music scene. He has worked in studios and toured plenty, but when you ask people about what they love and admire about the West Coast six-stringer, they will talk about his command of the instrument, his accomplishments as a composer, his fearlessness on stage and his absolutely incredible tone. Consequently, his responses to my questions often return to his aesthetic as an artist and to the importance of personal expression.

Why did Liebig move beyond four strings? As he says, "I wanted to have more orchestral range and potential from my instrument." After all, his upright bass had a C extension and "low E sometimes didn't feel like it was really low". Like Roberto, Liebig cites Anthony Jackson's pioneering work in extending the range of electric bass.

This statement stood out for me: "Either playing or writing, I look for fluidity of technique, integrity of idea or musical gesture and a sense of place and time. Imagination is the most important chop". He seeks to become "more elemental – meaning there's less analysis or intellectualising, and more going for it and being in the moment." As someone who has listened to him play for decades, this perpetual striving is incredibly inspiring. He takes this further, adding, "I strive to be in the music and commit to it every time I play. I want what I play to have integrity and clarity – even if I'm freaking out or making noise… I want to be in a place where every note has intent and meaning. It surprises me how many musicians do not seem to listen. Even playing solo requires attentive listening." Liebig places the music first, and although many would describe him as a master musician, he still has a list of weaknesses and things he works to improve. As he says, "I feel the instrument is capable of way more than most people are willing to acknowledge. I would like to see less imitation and more exploring of a personal way of playing music. In the end, it's only a box of colours that you're using, and sometimes your palette needs to change." This is why the man's a hero of mine.

www.facebook.com + search 'Stewart McKinsey'

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ELLEN O'REILLY

BEGINNER'S GUIDE ELLEN TAKES US DEEPER INTO THE MODES ZONE

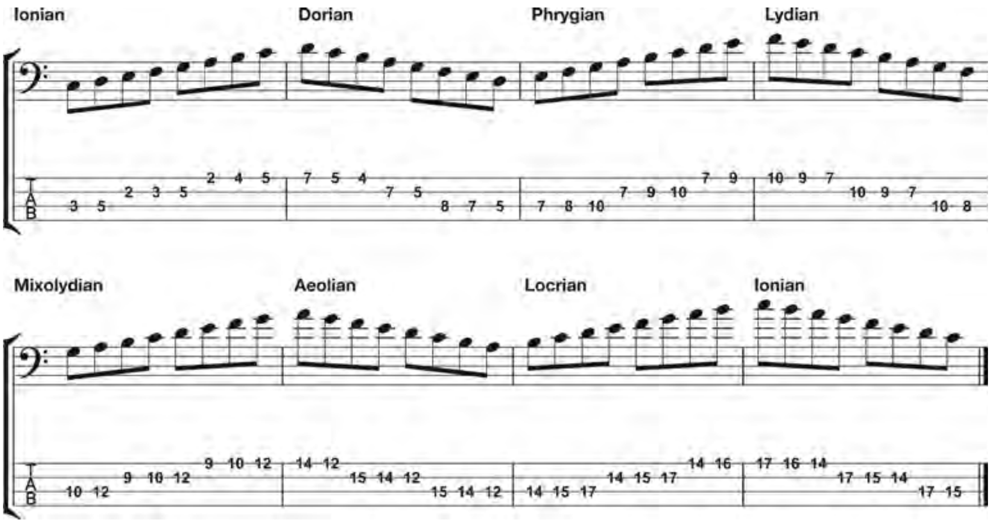
Hey low-enders! Welcome back to the second instalment of our study of the modes of the major scale. Last month we were introduced to the seven modes and how they correlate to each degree (or step) within a certain key (or parent scale). Knowledge of this frees us up to play with confidence across the fretboard. Let's have a quick recap.

As you can see from the table, certain modes can be played over particular chords of the harmonised major scale. This is because each mode has certain attributes that work well with certain chords. For example, Ionian, Lydian and Mixolydian all have a major 3rd, so they work well over major triads. That said, if they are 7 chords then the Ionian and Lydian will work over a major7 chord, but the Mixolydian mode should be played over the dominant7 chord.

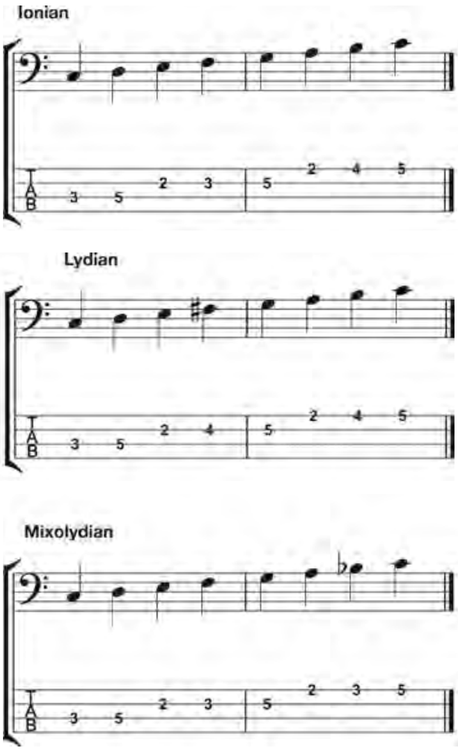
This month we will look in depth at the more 'major' sounding modes. See **Example 2**.

Scale Degree	Mode	...which can be played over these chords	chord symbol
1st - I	Ionian	major – major7	maj, maj7, m7
2nd - II	Dorian	minor – minor7	min, min7, m7
3rd - III	Phrygian	minor – minor7	min, min7, m7
4th - IV	Lydian	major – major7	maj, maj7, m7
5th - V	Mixolydian	major – dominant7	maj, dom7
6th - VI	Aoelian	minor – minor7	min, min7, m7
7th - VII	Locrian	minor – minor7b5	min, min7b5, m7b5

Example 1



Example 2



The Ionian mode is also known as the major scale and consists of the following formula:

Root – major 2nd – **major 3rd** – perfect 4th – **perfect 5th** – major 6th – **major 7th**

The Lydian mode consists of this formula:

Root – major 2nd – **major 3rd** – *augmented 4th* – **perfect 5th** – major 6th – **major 7th**

And the Mixolydian mode consists of this formula:

Root – major 2nd – **major 3rd** – perfect 4th – **perfect 5th** – major 6th – ***minor 7th***

As you can see, I have highlighted in bold the chord tones of each mode/scale as they define which chord goes with which mode. This way you can see that the chord tones of Ionian and Lydian are the same (M3, P5 and maj7th) but for Mixolydian the 7th is flattened so you now have (M3, P5 and a minor or flattened 7th). This means that the Ionian and Lydian modes can be played over a major7 chord, but Mixolydian is used to play over a dominant7 chord as it has both a major 3rd and a flat 7.

I have also indicated in italics the only differences the Lydian and Mixolydian have from the Ionian. The Lydian is just like the Ionian (major scale), but with an augmented (or sharpened) 4th while the Mixolydian has a flattened (or minor) 7th. Until next month, have fun!

APP EXTRA

PAUL GEARY

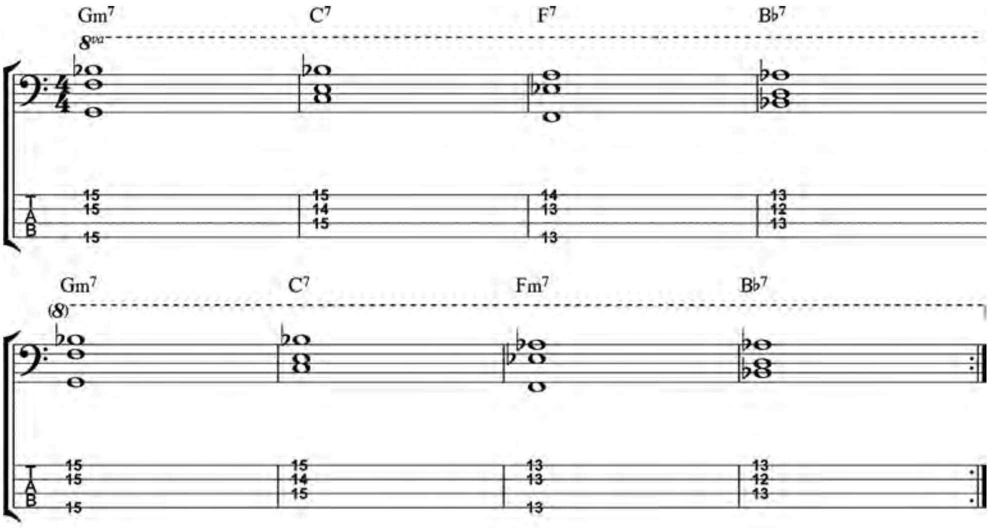
CHORD PROGRESSIONS? OUR MAN GEARY HAS THEM DOWN... AND SO WILL YOU

This month I would like to continue our exploration of chords and begin to put them into a progression. Remember to play all of these examples above the 12th fret. Any lower on the bass and they begin to sound a little dull and muddy. Try to keep a steady pulse while playing the following examples. As you begin to get more familiar with the actual chord shape, your fingers should adapt quite quickly to the various positions, and in turn this will help you to move through the progression smoothly and effectively with good tone and meter. The key is repetitive practice of the chord shapes: this will help to build muscle memory.

EXAMPLE 1

Let's start with a Gm7. Use your first finger of your fretting hand to play the root of G, your second on the F and your third finger on the Bb. Make sure you hit all the strings cleanly with the same velocity, this will help the chord to project and sound full. Next is the C7. The root of C should be played with the second finger of the fretting hand, followed by the first finger on the 14th fret of the D string playing the E. Finally, let the third finger play the Bb on the 15th fret of the G string.

Example 1



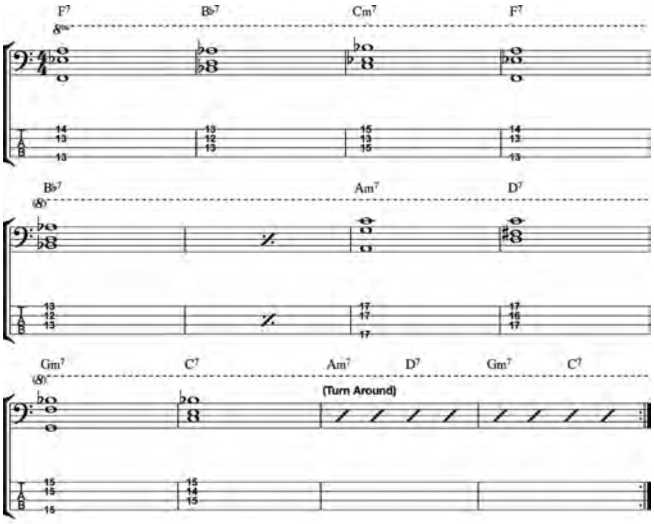
Try switching between the two chords simultaneously. This particular chord change should become quite familiar as your fingers are programmed to the shape. Use your thumb plus the first and second fingers of your picking hand to strike the strings at the same time. This, combined with the fretting hand, should deliver a clean-sounding chord.

The next chord is an F7. Put your first finger on the 13th fret of the E string playing the F note, followed by the second finger on the 13th fret of the D string playing the Eb, and finally the third finger on the 14th fret of the G string, playing the A note which is the major 3rd of F7. Notice that the major 3rd A is played higher to get a much cleaner sound.

The last chord is Bb7. Use the same shape as the C7, but start on the root of Bb at the 13th fret of the A string. On the third bar of the second line you will notice a Fm7. Again use the exact same shape as the Gm7 but start on the root of the Fm7 at the 13th fret of the E string.

EXAMPLE 2

Example 2



This collection of chords represents a standard jazz blues progression. Start out at 80bpm, making sure all of the chords are played cleanly and in time.

Experiment using your thumb and fingers of your plucking hand to strike the strings.

Remember that each note of the chord needs to be heard, so they must be played with the same pressure and velocity in order to get the right sound and tone.

In bar three we have a Cm7 chord. The fingering pattern is slightly different to the previous minor shape. Use the second finger of your fretting hand to play the root of C, your first finger to play the minor 3rd Eb, and your third finger to play the minor 7th Bb.

Starting at bar five, a Bb7 chord is played over two bars. Have a go at changing the rhythm with your plucking hand in bar six. This should deliver some nice variations around the chord shape. Next up is the Am7. This can be played as written, using the same shape as the Gm7.

Finally we have the turnaround: this sequence of chords gets us back to the beginning of the progression. There are no new chords to learn, but you will see for the first time that we have two chords in each bar. This means you have to be quick with your chord changes. I have deliberately left the chord stacks out on the turnaround, because the same chords occur earlier in the sequence.

See you next time!

ROB STATHAM

GETTING YOUR FINGERS IN A TWIST WHEN CHANGING POSITIONS? STATHAM IS HERE TO HELP

Having to shift position on the bass in order to accommodate a particular line is a frequent challenge we face, and so I thought it might be helpful to take a look at our various options in this regard. We've probably all had the experience of playing a particular figure that requires a position shift, played too much of it in a lower position, and ended up trying to shift up on the top string on one finger – not the ideal solution.

Let's break down the type of position shifts we might use into a number of different categories. One method would be to use extended fingering, which is to say spanning more than one finger per fret. We have looked at two ways we might consider this when looking at different fingering patterns in a previous column; specifically, we might use a five-fret span, or, beyond this, we might use extended fingering where we can conceive of as much as an interval of a perfect 4th between first and fourth finger on the same string. For instance, G on the third fret on the E string with our first finger, then reaching to C at the eighth fret on the same string with our fourth finger. In my experience, reaching more than a perfect 4th – a span of six frets – starts to become difficult to execute accurately, depending on tempo, and is best avoided where possible.

Other than this method, we might have to shift from, for instance, the fourth finger on the fifth fret to the first finger on the seventh fret on the same string to accommodate a position shift. Not the easiest approach and best avoided if possible, but sometimes it might be our only option, as we shall see. Another method would be to use open strings to facilitate a shift, though this is only an option in certain keys of course. The method we probably most want to avoid is to shift on the same finger on a string, maybe attempting to play a succession of notes with the same finger on the same string as we ascend or descend. Here we probably have least control, so this is something to avoid: there's always a better way than this, if we plan it out effectively.

In **Example 1**, I demonstrate how useful open strings can be to facilitate a position shift, in this case in the context of a two octave scale of F major. In this key we have three options using open strings; the A, D, or G string, all of these notes required in the scale, and so I have tabbed out these possibilities. Obviously the notation is the same in each example, so it is the tab we need to take note of here. In the first bar we shift on the open A, then playing a five-fret span for the notes Bb, C, and D, and then the rest of the scale can be played in a familiar four-fret position. The next two bars use the open D string and G string respectively, and here, once we have made the position shift, we can again use one finger per fret to complete the scale. These three approaches sit quite nicely under the fingers, perhaps the first a little harder with the five-fret span, but, as mentioned, we might not have the choice of an open string depending on the key, and in higher positions they would be of no use anyway, so this is not an option we can rely on.

Example 2 is a useful exercise to practise our five-fret spans and extended fingering of a perfect 4th in the context of a two-octave major triad arpeggio, here initially written in the key of G. The same pattern should be practised in other keys too and so I have suggested this in the second bar, moving up a semitone, a pattern we could continue. As you can see, we play a five-fret span from 1st to 3rd of the triad, then again on the D string for the 1st and 3rd an octave higher, finishing with a stretch of a perfect 4th on the G string to reach the second octave. This is a good warm-up exercise to get our fingers stretching, and I often start a practice session like this, perhaps moving down in semitones from a higher position, thus having to stretch a little more each time.

Example 3 uses a combination of approaches to cover a wide range in an exercise I would recommend as an effective way of facing these position shift issues and generally getting to know the fretboard thoroughly. Here we are playing the scale of E major from the lowest possible note in the scale to the highest possible note, a top D# on a 20-fret bass, two octaves and a major 7th from the root. In this case the lowest note happens to be the root note, but the idea is to play the lowest note in the scale or mode we're attempting regardless of whichever degree it happens to be in the key we're playing it in,

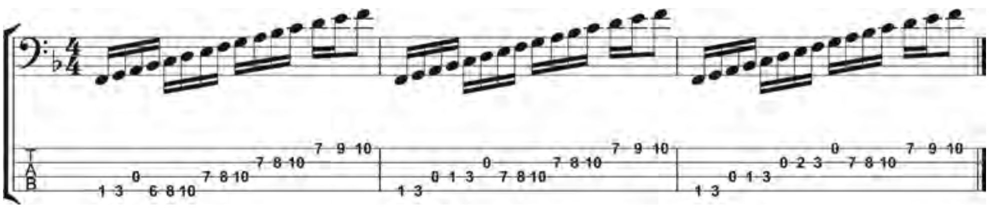
likewise at the top end with the highest note. This is an exercise we should attempt in all scales and modes and in all keys, requiring a combination of all our different position shift strategies. Moreover, there is no one correct way, and we should look at all the possibilities for each exercise; considering the variable of where and how we shift, it is often quite surprising just how many options there usually are.

Here, in our E major example, I use one possible combination, the first octave being played almost entirely on the E string. In fact, I use the open A, the 4th note of the scale, to shift to my first finger on B, the seventh fret on the E string, and then use extended fingering to reach the octave, using each finger in turn to play the 5th, 6th, major 7th, and octave. Next, I shift to my first finger on F# on the fourteenth fret on the E string, a trickier shift, but from here can continue to the top D# using a combination of regular four-fret spans, a five-fret span on the top string, and one extended fingering covering a perfect fourth on the A string, from the fifth to second octave. This is easier to accomplish in the upper register with smaller stretches. Experiment with other possibilities, using different combinations of our shifting strategies, as this is just one example of how we might accomplish this.

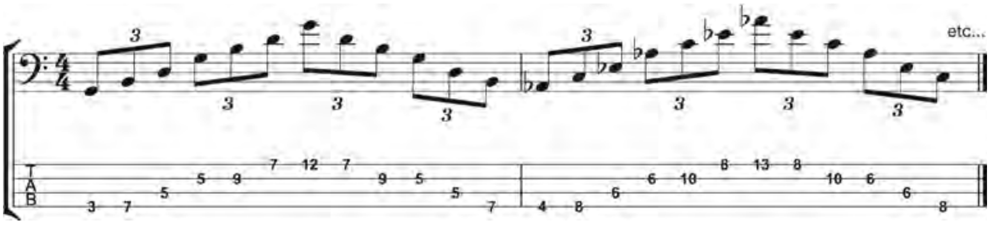
Example 4 is an illustration of where it can be a good strategy to shift up on one string, in this case moving through a diminished scale as over a D7b9 chord and using a pedal open D to facilitate each small position adjustment. Although this is not technically too hard, at least at a reasonable tempo, it can be confusing, moving between two different fingerings and two different interval shifts, a semitone or a tone, so take it slowly at first until you are clear about the pattern. This idea could be used in other keys, using a dead note instead of the open string to maintain the 16th-note pulse.

Finding good fingering solutions is a big part of learning bass-lines and position shifts are a major consideration. It's a good idea to be clear about the different strategies we can use, and try to be exhaustive in looking for different possibilities – there are always more than you think.

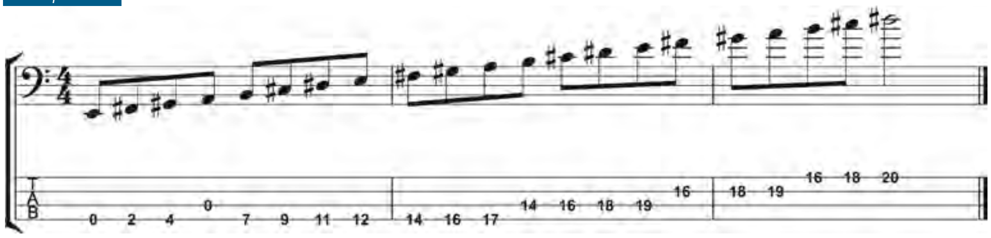
Example 1



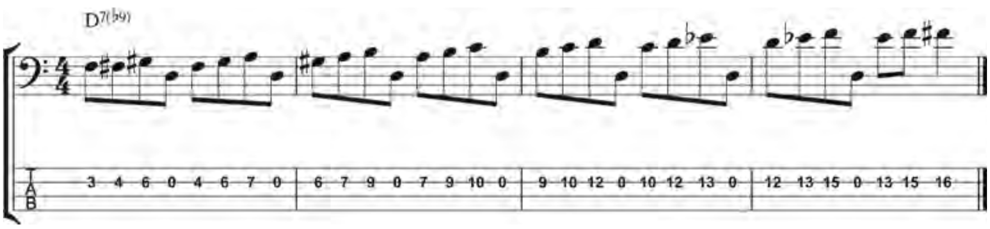
Example 2



Example 3



Example 4



"FINDING GOOD FINGERING SOLUTIONS IS A BIG PART OF LEARNING BASS-LINES AND POSITION SHIFTS ARE A MAJOR CONSIDERATION. IT'S A GOOD IDEA TO BE CLEAR ABOUT THE DIFFERENT STRATEGIES WE CAN USE"

ALEX WEBSTER

ACCENTED 16TH GROUPINGS IN 4/4 ARE THE WAY FORWARD, SAYS PROF WEBSTER

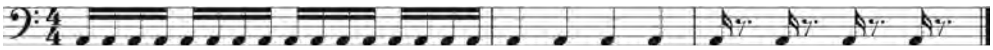
Last month we started to explore different ways to accent and group 8th notes in in 4/4 time. Carrying on in this direction, this month we’ll look at different groupings of 16th notes in 4/4 time.

The first bar of **Example 1** shows a standard 16th note pulse in 4/4. I’ve put accents on every note that falls on a beat, which you might not normally do, but for the purposes of this month’s lesson it seems like a good idea as it will make the difference between this example and the following ones more clear. The second and third bars of the example show held-out notes and single short notes that land on these same acce

nts. We’ll follow this format for the other examples as well.

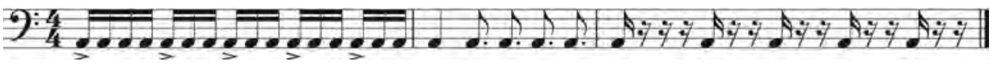
Example 2 shows a fairly common accenting pattern: 3, 3, 3, 3, 4. As you play through it, be sure to keep your foot tapping to the original 4/4 beat. You’ll notice that this pattern creates a short polyrhythm over the first three beats and then lands squarely on the fourth beat.

Example 1



Example 2

Example 3



Example 4

Example 3 is similar to **Example 2**, the only difference being that the grouping of four precedes the groups of three rather than follows it. So this time you’ll hear that polyrhythmic four-over-three feel on beats two, three, and four.

Example 4 features the 16th note pattern: 3, 3, 4, 3, 3. It’s the trickiest of the four examples in my opinion: it’s definitely the most syncopated of the bunch. This being the case, I’d suggest you work on the first bar of it for as long as you need before moving on to the second and third. If you can keep the accents of the pulse in the first bar in your head while playing the held and short notes of the following bars you’ll have a much easier time of it.

These are just a few examples of how accents and groupings can make a simple pulse in a common time signature more interesting. Once you have them mastered try coming up with your own 16th note variations in 4/4: whatever the pattern, if it adds up to 16 it should work.

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FRANC O'SHEA

IT'S TIME TO ROCK ONCE MORE WITH FRANC'S AMAZING BASS SOLO

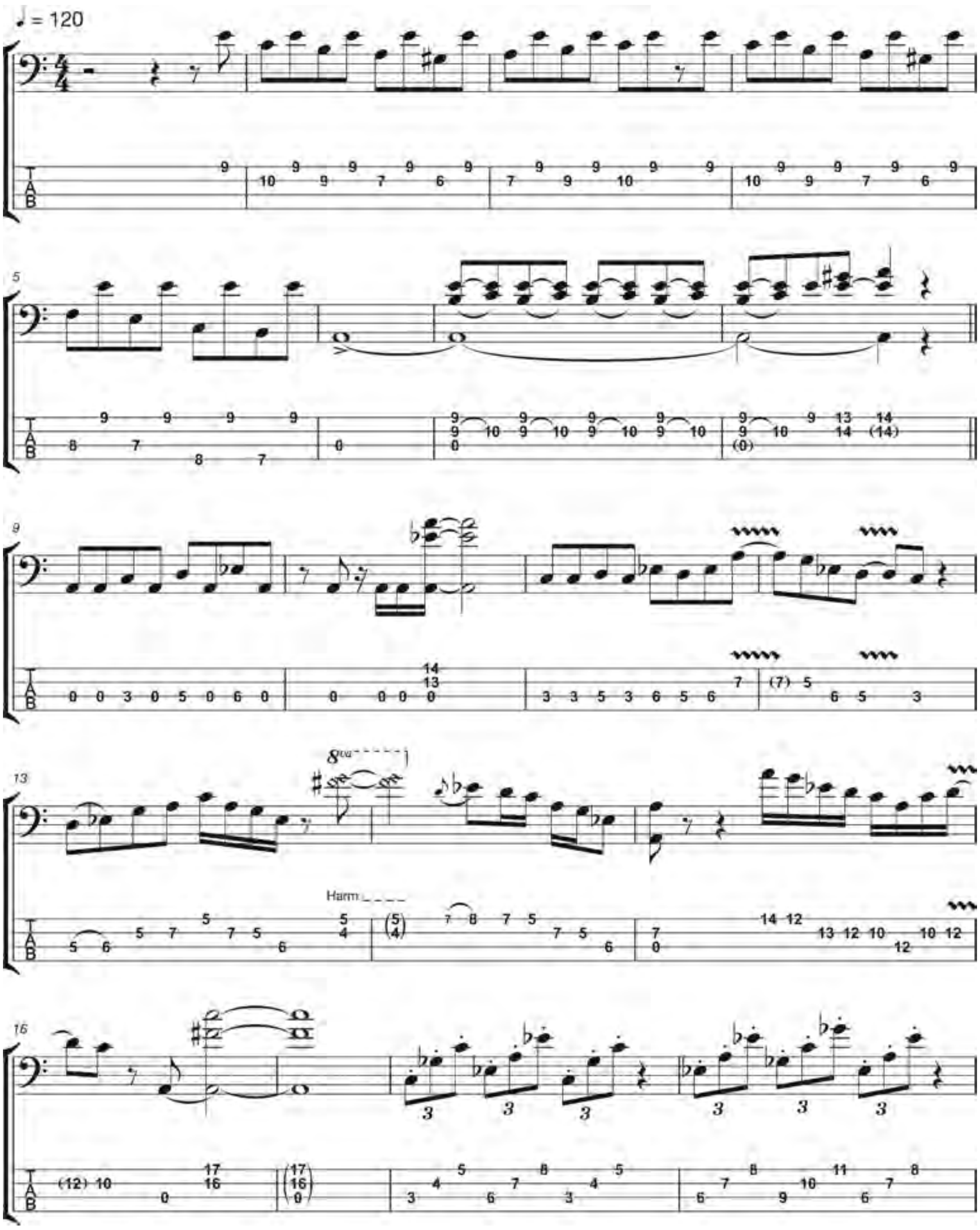
In this month's column I will be analysing a rock solo that I have devised as an example of how an effective bass solo could be created in this genre. I have brought together different stylistic elements associated with rock and none of them sound out of place in context of the whole solo. For example, there are parts that would work well in a straight rock setting; others that wouldn't sound inappropriate in a metal solo and even parts that would work in a progressive rock context. Often the boundaries between these genres can become blurred.

The entire solo would work well as an intro to a song, as a breakdown section or simply as a bass and drums workout. As the solo has many dynamic changes, I would have a drummer play with me if I were playing it live or recording it, so that they could help build the intensity.

I suggest that you start out learning the solo slowly, say at 70bpm, and gradually build up the tempo. This may seem slow to start out with, but some parts, especially bar 30, are fairly tricky to play accurately at higher tempos. See if you can eventually get up to 120bpm.

The solo is in the key of A minor and starts out with a baroque-style section, reminiscent of Johann Sebastian Bach, which is built on a harmonic minor scale. Classical motifs are not uncommon in rock solos, especially those based in the metal genre. This section sets the solo up nicely as it creates some calm before the rest of the solo kicks in. I have made this section quite short due to limitations of space, but it could be extended to prolong the effect.

Example 1

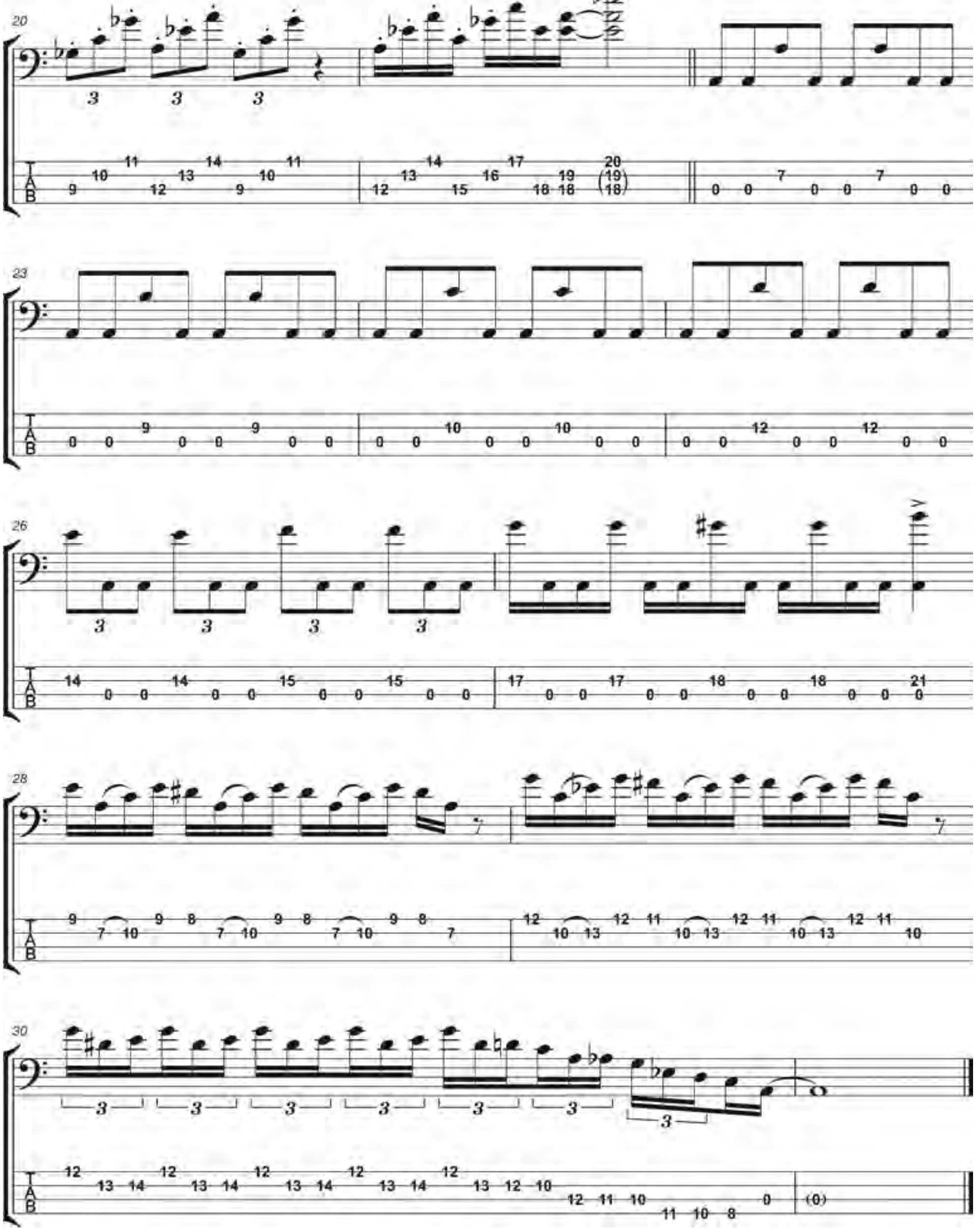


From bar nine through to bar 17 the solo changes gear and rocks out a little more. A sympathetic drummer would pick up on this dynamic shift, for example by shifting from playing light cymbals in the opening section and launching into a full rock beat for this new section. One drummer who I've worked with, Darrin Mooney from Primal Scream, affectionately calls this type of power playing 'lumping it'.

The phrase in bars nine to 10 employs the minor blues scale but omits the perfect 5th, so that the darker-sounding diminished 5th clearly stands out. This dissonance is highlighted at the end of the phrase where the open A string creates the foundation for the upper tritone interval on the D and G strings to ring out.

The tension continues to build in the 11th and 12th bars with an answer to the previous phrase. In this case

Example 2



the new phrase has climbed the scale and some vibrato is employed to ratchet up the tension. In bar 13 we see a continuation of this process which not only incorporates a 16th note flourish but is topped off with the most dissonant interval in the Western tuning system, the b9, in harmonics. This is rendered by lightly touching the strings, not pressing them down, at the fourth fret of the D string and at the fifth fret of the G string. To get these harmonics to ring out clearly, I pluck the strings fairly hard using my right hand index and middle fingers simultaneously, rather than raking down the strings.

This section appears to end after the next phrase, which seems to draw it to a conclusion in bar 14 and on the first beat of bar 15 by stating the open A and its higher octave. However, the fun isn't completely over yet, and one more phrase appears like a lightning bolt out of the blue, spanning bars 15 to 17 and is topped off by the meat of an A diminished 7th chord using not only the root but also its minor 3rd and diminished 7th intervals.

After a breather for a measure, some spiky quaver triplets are employed from bars 18 to 20. I say spiky not only because each note has a staccato indication to make it short, but also because of the root, diminished 5th and octave pattern employed which moves up and down in minor 3rds. This type of angular sound wouldn't be out of place in an epic prog-rock track: for example, think of Rush's 'Cygnus X-1' tune from their *A Farewell To Kings* album. To make this section even more effective and to give it contrast with the previous one, the drummer could leave more space and highlight the triplets. In the next bar we see a break from the triplets but not from the dissonant melodic pattern, which is now rendered in 16th notes, creating a rhythmic modulation from the menacing build-up in the previous three bars to the rollercoaster of bar 21.

As we head toward the finale, bar 22 is time to rock out again, only this time with the drummer not just 'lumping it', but lumping it large, with the ride cymbal in tow. Here the low A string creates a pumping pedal point that crosses the beat, with higher notes gradually ascending a natural minor scale on the D string. The pattern starts out with an 8th note rhythm, but by bar 26 there is a modulation to quaver triplets, while bar 27 sees a further rhythmic modulation to 16th notes.

Bar 28 builds the excitement further with a repeating symmetrical diminished scale motif that is repeated up a minor 3rd in bar 29. The solo has now reached its climax and is topped off with a fast semiquaver triplet lick in bar 30 that eventually runs down the bones of a minor blues scale, omitting the perfect 5th and adding in a major 7th, before the low A string is accented and left to ring out defiantly at the end in bar 31.

By studying a solo such as this one, you will be able to gain insights in how to use dynamics and both rhythmic and intervallic tension to create a dramatic effect. Next month I will start looking at how you can create an effective solo in the funk genre. Until then, 'get your rocks off'…

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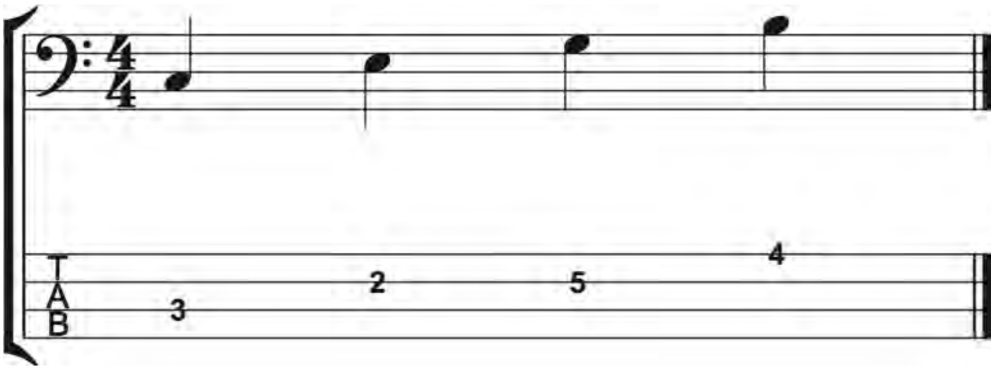
PHIL MANN

HATS OFF TO PHIL MANN AFTER A YEAR OF ADVANCED BASS WORKOUTS. IT ONLY GETS TOUGHER!

Over the last 11 instalments of advanced techniques we've tapped our way through major, minor, augmented and diminished triads; major and minor pentatonics; sweep arpeggios; 7th chords; double stops; and harmonising the major scale. We've even looked at a bit of chord substitutions – it's been a big year to say the least. This month we've hit a landmark as issue 112 is my *BGM* birthday! Thanks to everyone for your support, I've loved being part of the team and hope you guys have learned a lot from my columns. This month will be the last instalment of the tapping programme before we move on to a new topic. Next time out, we start studying four-fingered technique – so ramps at the ready, guys, and prepare to investigate the style of the likes of Gary Willis and Matthew Garrison. For now, take a look at the following...

Example 1



Hopefully most of you will identify this as our old friend, a C major 7th arpeggio, but have you ever stopped to think just how many ways you could actually perform it? You should, as there's probably a lot more than you first anticipated. In fact, there is a total of 24 different combinations! Actually, if you introduce 1st, 2nd and 3rd inversion, you'll get a total of 96 different ways of playing the same four pitches. Permutations are a wonderful way of increasing vocabulary with your existing knowledge: they can lead to an endless stream of inspiration and ideas. We'd better take a look at this bass witchery...

Figure1

Figure 1 shows us how a 7th arpeggio can be performed in six different combinations using the root note as an anchor. Play through the following combinations using our initial C major 7th arpeggio from **Example 1**.

I - III - V - VII	I - V - III - VII	I - VII - III - V
I - III - VII - V	I - V - VII- III	I - VII - V - III

Figure2

This same method can also be applied using the 3rd as the anchor. **Figure 2** uses the same notes and the same methodology, but forms another six combinations starting from the 3rd.

III - I - V - VII	III - V - I - VII	III - VII - I - V
III - I - VII - V	III - V - VII- I	III - VII - V - I

Figure3

Figure 3 once again addresses the same four notes but this time views the chord's structure from the 5th.

V - I - III - VII	V - III - I - VII	V - VII - I - III
V - I - VII - III	V - III - VII - I	V - VII - III - I

Figure4

Our final figure, **Figure 4**, addresses the same four notes, but this time viewing the structure from the 7th.

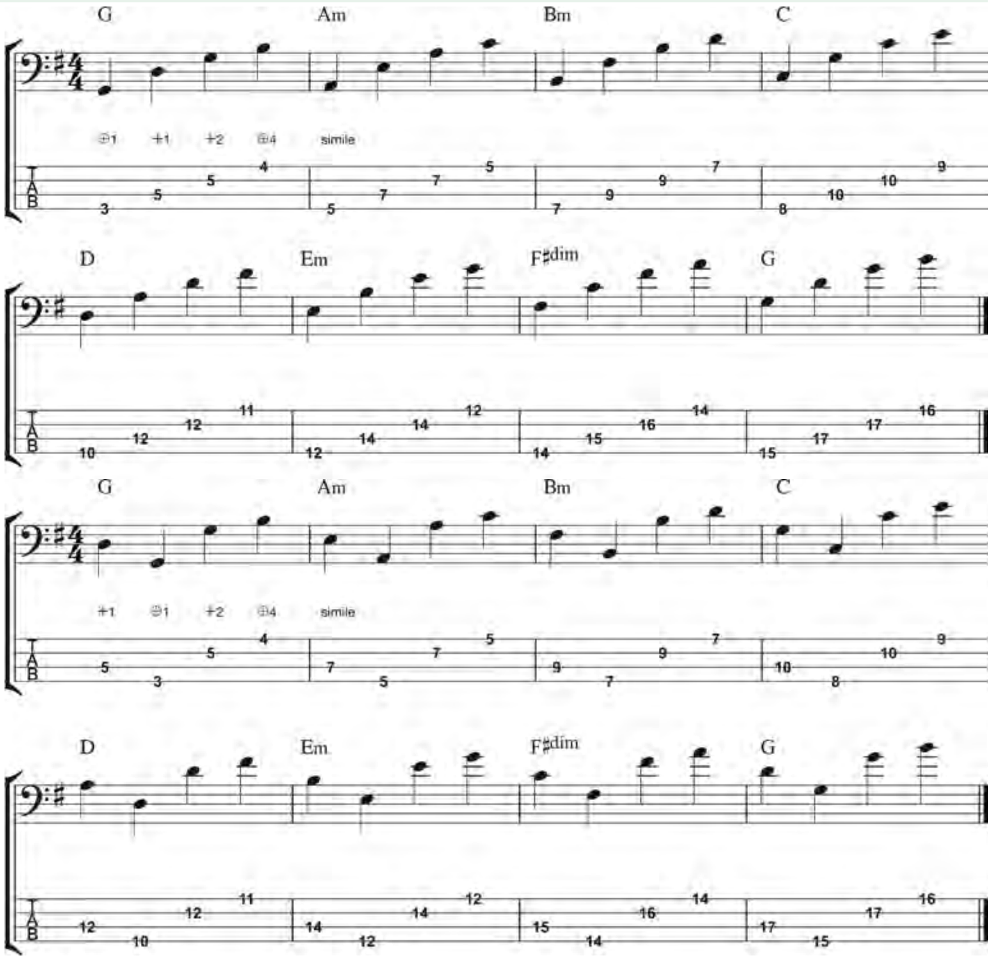
VII - I - III - V	VII - III - I - V	VII - V - I - III
VII - I - V - III	VII - III - V - I	VII - V - III - I

"IT'S THIS FORM OF ANALYSIS THAT I ADDRESS IN MY SERIES OF TEXTS, CHORD TONE CONCEPTS, BUT HOW CAN WE ACTUALLY APPLY IT?"

Example 2 amd 3

It's this form of analysis that I address in my series of texts, *Chord Tone Concepts*, but how can we actually apply it? Well, back in *BGM* 102 we learned to harmonise the G major scale using triads. We then split the diatonic information between both left and right hands and delivered it in a tapped manner. Let's revise this information now:

Now, it's quite possible to apply the same permutation methods that we investigated earlier to **Exercise 2**. Although the actual pitches we play in each bar consist of the root, followed by the 5th, octave and finally the 3rd, view the phrase simply as four notes and then apply the 24 different combinations to those pitches. **Exercise 3** involves the same pitches with a different permutation applied; I'll leave you to enjoy the other 22. Until next time, practise hard!



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DAVID ETHERIDGE

DOUBLE BASS SUPREMO DAVID ETHERIDGE LOOKS AT FURTHER CHORD EXTENSIONS

This time around let's look at extended chords, all the way up to 13ths. We've seen how the 7th can be extended up to a 9th chord quite easily, but once we get to 11ths and 13ths, things start to get even more interesting. Some players get confused over chords of this nature, as they try to work out just which chord is which and how far up the scale from the root note the chord notes are.

With 11ths and 13ths, we can simplify the naming by calling them slash chords: a chord over a seemingly unrelated bass note. Remember in a past column where I showed how different bass notes other than the root can change the whole chord (for example, C over A actually becomes Am7)? Well with 11ths we enter this territory. Have a look at **Figure 1**: the first three examples are various versions of an 11th chord. The first one is a plain 11th, but if you apply the slash chord idea you can see that it's simply the notes of Gm7 over C, written as Gm7/C. The next example is a bit different: C11 (b7b9), or Gm7b5 over C, while the third example gives C+11, or Gm+7/C. Hopefully you get the idea.

You may be asking yourself, why no 3rd in the chord? In the case of C11, the 11th (F) would clash with the 3rd (E), although I recall an argument some years ago on an internet forum with someone from across the water who insisted that the 3rd should be included. It sounds horrible if you do. The next three examples show various versions of 13th chords. Here you'll see that we can eliminate both the 3rd and the 5th from the chord, giving in effect a Bbmaj7/C, and a Bbmaj7+5/C chord. The last version is a plain C13 chord voicing, with the 7th below the 13th indicating that it is a 13th and not the 6th of the chord. I'll add here that with the two more advanced 13th chords you can also add the 5th to them, giving Gm9/C and Gm9+7/C: **Figure 2**.

In **Figure 3**, it can be seen that 11th chords can sound similar to, and be re-voiced as 7sus4 chords. Here the 11th degree is below the 5th as a virtual 4th, but the 7th automatically labels it as an 11th. This is different from a pure sus4 chord of C, F and G.

Here's another extended chord that sounds terrific, a C6/9: **Figure 4**. I've written this one down an octave to save on the ledger lines. Note for five- and six-string bassists: this is very easy to play in its entirety using double octave harmonics at the 5th fret (the top G is optional for those without a high C string). It also impresses any audiences who don't realise that bassists can do such stuff!

Now, all of these chords, and the ones that I've shown in past columns, can be modified in many ways, and they'll all occur sooner or later in jazz and more adventurous styles of music. Usually varying tones will be moved up or down a semitone, with major and minor 3rds, raised and flattened 5ths, raised and flattened 9ths and raised 11ths, in any and all combinations. You can have great fun learning to recognise the sounds of these combinations. It may seem confusing at first, but I liken the effect to different flavours in food. Each chord has its own sound, or flavour, as it were. When you get used to this idea, you can hear a chord and immediately think 'That's a C13+11'.

Here's what such a beast looks like in **Figure 5**, again written an octave lower than normal for reasons of ledger lines. Notice that the combination of tones allows the use of the 3rd as well. The E (3rd) won't clash against the raised 11th (F#). It's one of my favourite chords, needless to say.

"CHORDS ARE THE LIFEBLOOD OF MUSIC, ALTHOUGH SOME DRUMMERS WILL OBVIOUSLY DISAGREE AND CLAIM THAT RHYTHM IS EVERYTHING"

Figure 1

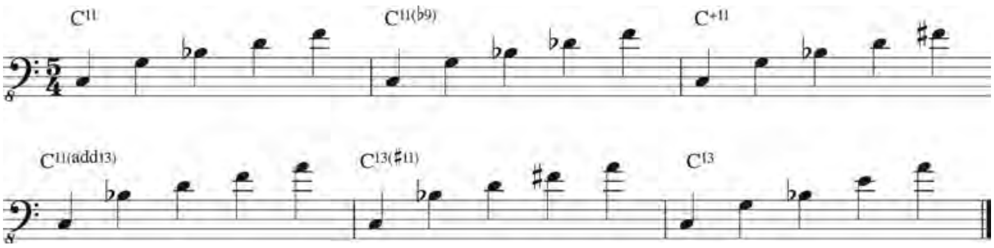
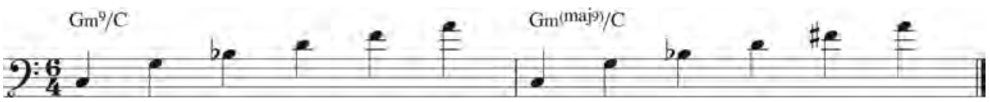


Figure 2



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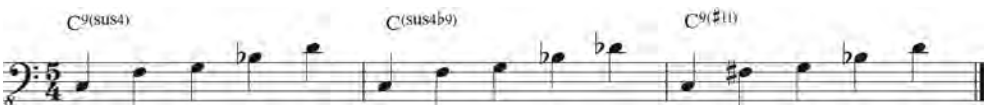
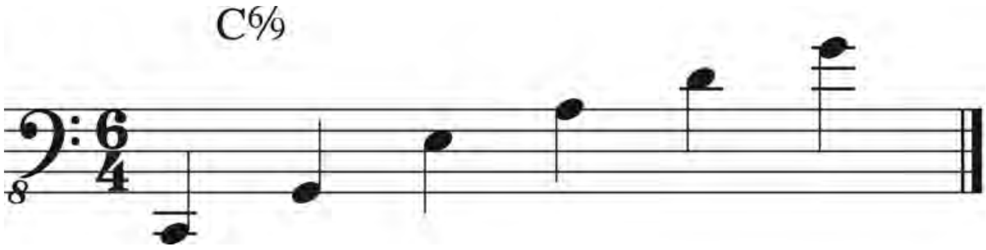


You may wonder why I've gone into chords in such detail, as we're only playing the bass note or a simple inversion. Chords are the lifeblood of music, although some drummers will obviously disagree and claim that rhythm is everything, and when you're working with guitarists and keyboard players who are using this advanced form of musical language, you'll be able to both hear and understand where they are coming from. It also means that your choice of notes will change subtly in the part you provide. Either way, it opens up a whole new world of harmonic progressions that's extremely rewarding.

Figure 4



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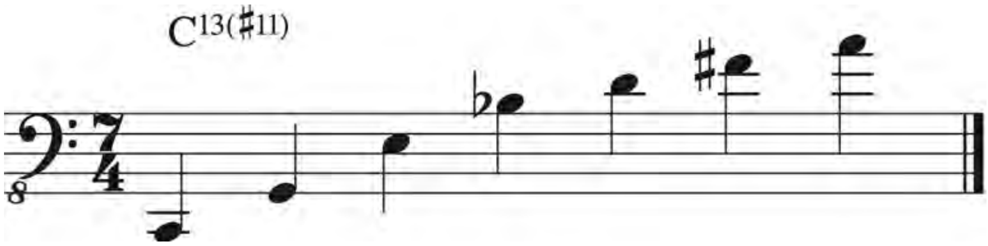

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MIKE BROOKS

MIKE BROOKS EXAMINES THE PLEASURES AND PITFALLS OF A PUB GIG

Hi, low-end groove fans! Pubs and functions are totally different scenarios, like chalk and cheese: from the booking process to the actual gig, the financial rewards and what is expected of you. Yet many bands make common mistakes when they first enter the world of private functions, corporate events and weddings. Higher fees create a high level of expectation from the client, as they expect you to entertain their guests and give them a memorable night for the right reasons. Assuming you can turn up in your ripped jeans and grubby T-shirt and stroll through your standard pub set really isn't the ticket.

Pubs are where you learn your craft, from dealing with drunks, gear breaking down, coping with problems, firefighting (not literally!) on the spot, playing as a band and being as tight as possible. How many players have spent hours programming multi-FX units at home and in rehearsal, only to use their magically crafted presets on a gig and realise they need to go back to the drawing board...

The bottom line for the landlord is how much money he takes over the bar, so the longer you keep the audience in his bar spending money is the prime consideration. Repeat bookings throughout the year form the spine of your gigging diary and can be your 'bread and butter' work. Most landlords (or bookers if they leave it to a member of staff) appreciate that they need good bands to keep their bar busy, and on the whole most play fair – but experience has taught me to be prepared for late cancellations and the well-worn "I've double booked you with another band" line, so stay in regular contact with the venues you play in.

Every venue is different, so always be on your toes. Some venues provide a PA and soundman and some don't, so check when making the booking. Soundchecks can vary from a five-minute line check to a one-hour setup and check. Occasionally, you may receive a rider (drinks and food) but again, this varies from venue to venue.

Switch to a function, wedding or private event, and any ragged edges are expected to have been replaced with a slick polished performance. With any private booking, ensure that you have a signed contract and don't feel hesitant about asking for a deposit. In the current economic climate it ensures the client's intention to book you and acts as a deterrent should they change their mind as the event nears.

Although functions involve higher fees, you have to be competitive to guarantee the work – but assess to what extent you're willing to compete. Consider the service you are providing, the hours involved and the mileage: the market now is very different to 10 years ago. Nevertheless, the band is expected to be on the ball and prepared for any eventuality, including equipment breakdowns. Be professional, punctual, polite and accommodating to the client's requirements at all times, which in itself can involve much tongue biting. Remember, you're there to keep people dancing, so plan your sets accordingly. This is where having a sizeable repertoire pays dividends.

Until next time!

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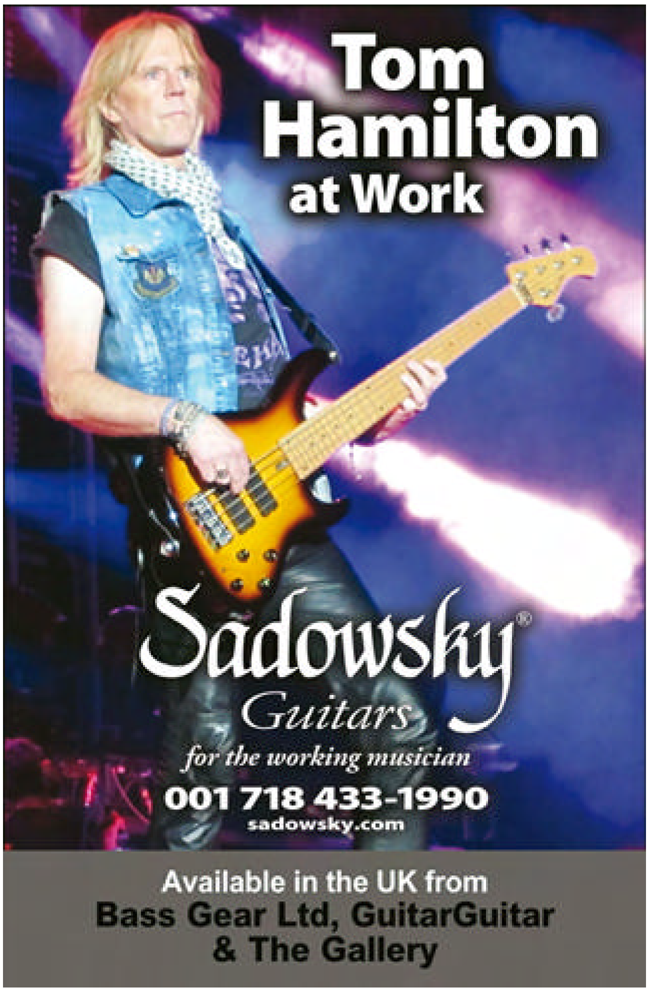
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STEVE LAWSON

EFFECTS BOSS LAWSON TAKES A LOOK AT MODELING TECHNOLOGY

We've talked a fair bit about the benefits of versatility versus simplicity when it comes to pedals and effects. This month, we're exploring the outer reaches of sonic malleability by taking a broad look at modeling technology.

Modeling is a digital process by which you emulate the characteristics of another pedal – or, in the case of the Roland VBass, the characteristics of an entirely different instrument. Modeling takes the sound of your instrument and applies a whole load of complex DSP (digital signal processing) to make it sound like you're using a tape delay, or recording in an actual cave, three feet from the left-hand wall, or are playing through a slightly broken late-1960s Fender Bassman, or are using a massive old studio delay unit when in fact you're using a tiny little pedal. Modeling characteristics can include degrees of 'wear and tear', acoustic spaces and even different kinds of hum that you'd get from an amp on different continents.

Line 6 built their entire reputation on modeling amps and cabinets. The effects section of the early POD products were a bit rudimentary, and rapidly improved (especially when they realised that the demand for 'loads of amps!' from bassists was a little lower than it was from guitar players) but they popularised the idea of turning up with a little guitar processor instead of a wall of cabinets, and just playing through the PA. This in turn lead to the emergence of FRFR (full range flat response) amps to reproduce whatever tone was selected, rather than sound like you'd mic'd one amp and run in through another (which would be a bit odd).

In the world of effect modeling, Lexicon, TC Electronic and Digitech have all made wonderful rackmount units that offer up clones of classic sounds. The sadly discontinued Lexicon MPX-G2 that I've been using for 15 years was way ahead of its time in the quality of its pedal emulations, hence me still using it now. In more recent times, the TC Electronic Toneprint idea has taken it all one stage further and allowed not only models of effects, but the downloading of sounds specific to particular players. The Toneprint editor allows for a dizzying array of options, so to narrow that down to 'presets', you can beam them (yes, beam them, like you're Captain flippin' Kirk) from your phone to the pedal. The TC Hall Of Fame Mini reverb pedal that I use has the option to map multiple effects to a single knob, and even plot a non-straight-line response curve. All a bit fiddly if you're not used to programming effects, but if you are, it's a godsend.

And there's more! If models of classic effects weren't enough, companies like Kemper and Two Notes now offer 'profiling': not only do they copy classic sounds for you to use, but you can copy your own classic sounds! Got a fragile old amp you love, but don't want to take to gigs? Profile it with your Kemper amp, and take that instead.

The possibilities are, if not endless, certainly beyond the point where we're going to run out any time soon. If you get the chance, try A/B-ing some modeled effects with their analogue forebears. You may find that the newer versions, with greater versatility and (often) reliability, are 'Even Better Than The Real Thing'.

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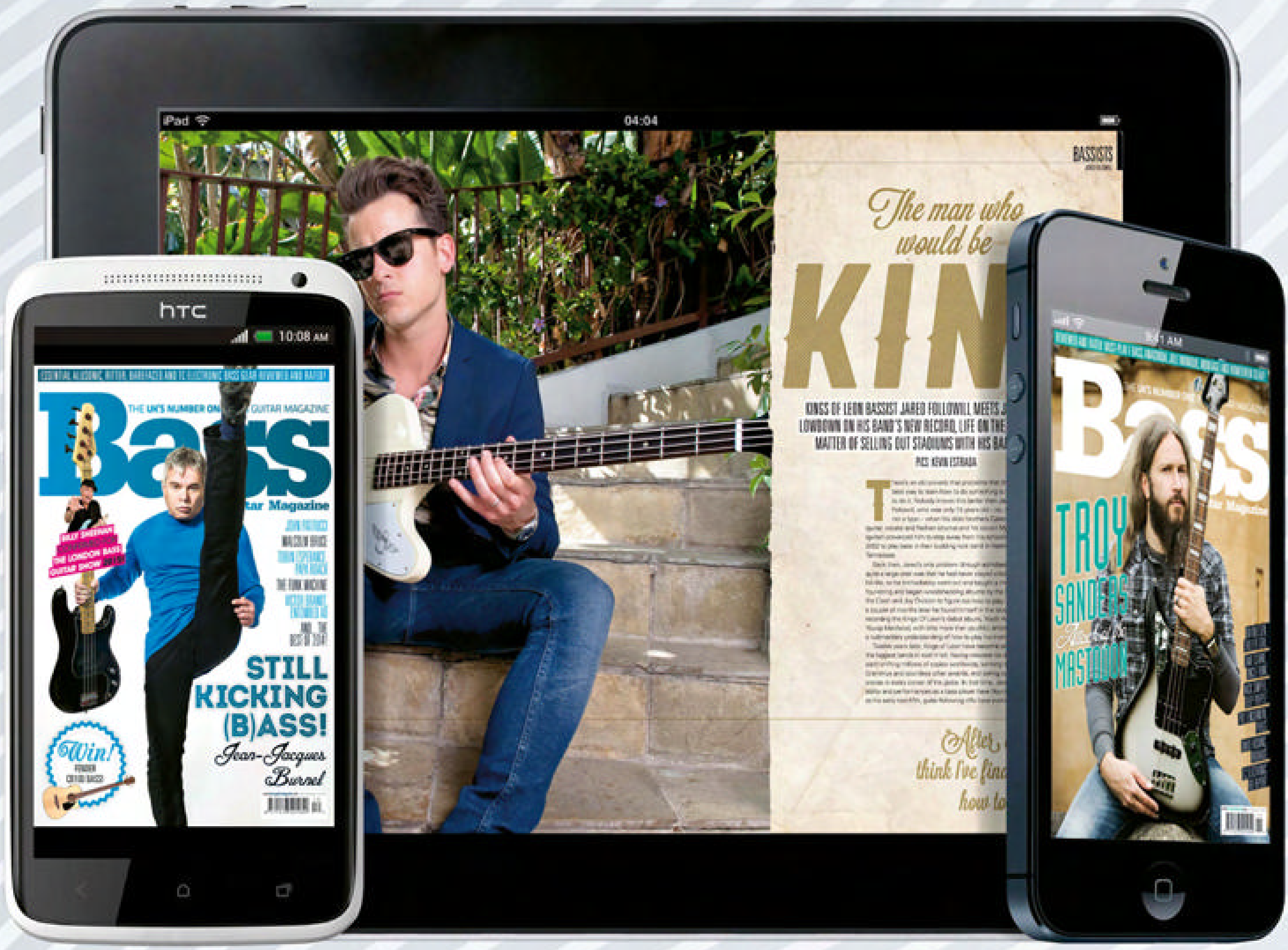

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Advertising Index

2 .... Headstock Distribution Ltd
3, 69 .... Warwick
7, 9 .... Bass Direct
11 .... Bass Centre
17 .... Barnes & Mullins
19 .... Andy Baxter Basses
25 .... Strings & Things
29 .... Yamaha
33 .... Korg
35 .... Radial Engineering
39 .... Promenade
43 .... Darkglass
47 .... TC Electronic
50 .... Allianz Musical Insurance
50 .... Shuker Bass
53 .... Synergy
53 .... Thomas & George Martin
56 .... JHS
56 .... F Bass
79 .... Sadowsky
79 .... Swan Song Guitars
83 .... Sims
84 .... Polar Audio

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